



Jordan Times

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Early poll returns show Ozal setback

ANKARA (AP) — Turks voted Sunday in elections expected to end the reign of the conservative Motherland Party and possibly undermine President Turgut Ozal, Turkey's dominant politician since the end of military rule in 1983. Although the president was not up for reelection, leading politicians have vowed to oust Mr. Ozal or limit him to the largely ceremonial role traditionally held by the president. The 30 million voters were choosing candidates for five-year terms in the 450-seat, single-chamber parliament. Voting is compulsory. The first unofficial returns indicated the Motherland Party, founded by Mr. Ozal and led by his son Yilmaz, would lose the parliamentary majority it has held since the military handed over power to civilians eight years ago. With nearly 134,000 ballots counted, the top vote-getter was the centre-right True Path Party, with 26.66 per cent, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported. The party is led by Suleyman Demirel, a veteran politician twice ousted by the military. Next came the centre-left Social Democratic Populist Party led by physics professor Erdal Inom, with 25.51 per cent. Both parties share Motherland's pro-Western stance and commitment to liberal free-market economic policies. Motherland had 24.56 per cent.

Algeria accepts conference invitation

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria has accepted an invitation to take part as an observer in the Middle East peace conference in Madrid, the official news agency APS reported Sunday. The agency said Algeria, the third North African country to declare it would attend the conference, decided to take part after intense contacts with Palestinians, Arab and European countries and the United States. It said invitation to attend the conference as observers had been sent to all members of the Arab Maghreb Union — Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Morocco and Tunisia have already announced they will attend. Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, who opposes the conference, on Saturday challenged Arab states to hold a referendum on whether they should take part in the conference. APS said Algeria was appealing to all the Arab parties to coordinate their positions ahead of the Oct. 30 conference.

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King, Arafat study Arab coordination ahead of peace talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday held talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on moves ahead of the Middle East peace conference to be held in Madrid on Oct. 30 and issues related to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation which will attend the conference. The talks were attended on the Jordanian side by Prime Minister Tahir Masiari, Royal Court Chief Sherif Zeid Ben Shaker, King Hussein's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odah and the King's Military Secretary Prince Talal Ben Muhammad. On the Palestinian side included Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee members Farouq Qaddoumi, Sulaiman Najib, Yasser Abed Rabbo and Yasser Amir and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Al Tayyeb Abdul Rahim. Earlier Sunday, Mr. Masiari met with Mr. Arafat and discussed with him Jordanian-Palestinian coordination prior to the peace conference, and coordination with other Arab parties directly involved in the peace conference, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The meeting was attended by

Deputy Prime Minister and Transport and Telecommunication Minister Ali Subeimat, Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif and Director of the Foreign Ministry's Palestinian Affairs Department Adel Ershaid. Mr. Arafat, who arrived here from Syria after a reconciliation meeting with President Hafez Al Assad, is seeking a summit of the leaders of the five Arab parties directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In comments to reporters, Mr. Arafat, chairman of the PLO, said he was carrying a message from President Assad to King Hussein "concerning the (proposed) Arab summit and Arab coordination." "Our discussions with King Hussein will focus on this issue (Arab summit) as well as other issues of concern such as coordination with the Jordanian government on matters related to the peace process," he said. PLO sources said later the King and Mr. Arafat discussed the draft of a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement on the principles and workings of the joint delegation to the peace conference. Reports said that the King and Mr. Arafat were expected to announce the formation and make-up of the joint delegation after the formal endorsement and



His Majesty King Hussein Sunday receives Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at the Royal Palace (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Palestinian negotiator expects settlement freeze

OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP (R) — The top Palestinian negotiator to the Middle East peace conference said Sunday he expected Israel to freeze Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip soon after talks begin in Madrid Oct. 30.

Dr. Haider Abdul Shafi, 72, was chosen Saturday to head the Palestinian delegation to the conference. Freezing of settlements, Dr. Abdul Shafi told Reuters, "would be very helpful. We are not making it a condition, but we expect Israel to freeze settlement at a very early stage after the start of negotiations." Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's hardline government, which voted overwhelmingly Sunday to enter the historic talks, has in recent months accelerated Jewish settlement of the occupied territories. Some 100,000 Jews and 1.75 million Arabs now live there. Dr. Abdul Shafi, associated with the Palestinian left, heads the Red Crescent Society in the occupied Gaza Strip. He was one of the founders of the Palestine National Council. Dr. Abdul Shafi said Israel risked isolation and pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union if it did not modify its present positions. "Hopefully some sort of pressure will be exercised so that Israel will feel the necessity of becoming more flexible." The success or failure of the conference will depend on the Israelis, he said. "If Israel continues to hold to its inflexible position, the likelihood of a breakdown in the conference is very real." Were Israel to agree in principle to the concept of Palestinian self-determination and of statehood, Dr. Abdul Shafi said: "It would encourage Palestinians to move towards the ideas of peace in stages and autonomy (for Arab residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza)." Mr. Shamir rejects any halt of Jewish settlements or the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. Mr. Abdul Shafi said the issue of Jerusalem was very complex, and would "require much more patience." "I admit that we as Palestinians could see it as a very simple matter, but in reality it is very complicated. In this sense it is reasonable not to be in a rush to try to deal with this issue." The status of Arab East Jerusalem is to be discussed at a later stage of the peace talks. Diplomatic sources said meanwhile, Israel and Syria are already at odds about where to hold direct bilateral negotiations

Hrawi in Paris

PARIS (AP) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi arrived Sunday for a two-day official visit to discuss the Middle East peace conference and French aid for his country's reconstruction after 16 years of civil war. Mr. Hrawi was accompanied by a six-man delegation for his first official visit to France since he was elected Nov. 24, 1989. He is to meet President Francois Mitterrand Monday, as well as Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and Defence Minister Pierre Joxe.

King, Pankin review Soviet role in Arab-Israeli parley

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin Sunday discussed preparations for the Middle East peace conference to be held in Madrid, Spain, on Oct. 30 and Moscow's efforts to help ensure the success of the conference. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, which reported the meeting, did not give details. Mr. Pankin said in an arrival statement that his country would exert all efforts to make the conference a success. Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, who received Mr. Pankin upon arrival from Syria, expressed Jordan's hope that the Soviet Union would continue to support the Arab position at the Madrid conference.



His Majesty King Hussein heads the Jordanian side to talks Sunday with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

"We look forward to seeing Soviet support continue now that we are on the doorsteps of the peace talks," Dr. Abu Jaber told reporters. He also expressed hope that Mr. Pankin's visit to Jordan would help advance Soviet-Jordanian relations. The King's talks with Mr. Pankin, who is on his first visit to the Middle East as Soviet foreign minister, were attended by Prime Minister Tahir Masiari and other senior officials as well as the Soviet ambassador to Jordan, Yuri Gerasimov. In his arrival comments, Mr. Pankin said his talks would mainly focus on the push for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict through the Madrid conference, which will be co-sponsored by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Mr. Pankin, whose President

Mikhail Gorbachev will attend the Madrid meeting along with U.S. President George Bush, said his country attached great importance to the conference as a "historic turning point" in the Middle East, offering a real chance for peace and stability for all peoples in the region. Asked whether the Soviet Union had any guarantees that Israel, with whom Moscow renewed diplomatic ties Friday, will relinquish occupied Arab territories, he said: "Nobody can guarantee the outcome of the peace conference. Issues which will be part of the conference agenda will be directly discussed by the participants who have to solve them..." "We will exert all our efforts to help them," he added. "Jordan, he added, occupies a pivotal role in the peace process and his visit to Amman also offered him a chance to seek means to further bilateral ties. Mr. Pankin, who, along with his American counterpart James Baker, announced the Madrid peace conference during a visit to

"An opportunity for peace in the region has come," Mr. Pankin said. "We hope that the forthcoming Arab-Israeli peace talks would give a momentum for peace and would achieve the desired objectives," he added. "The peace conference is designed to help the parties involved to reach permanent peace," he said. "The Soviet Union feels that it is its duty to work towards ensuring the success for all efforts in this direction."

Israeli cabinet votes to attend Madrid conference

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's cabinet voted Sunday in favour of Israel attending the Middle East peace conference to be sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union in Madrid.

The vote was 16 in favour and three against, said Transport Minister Moshe Katzav, who briefed reporters after the 7½-hour cabinet meeting. It was the last step needed for Israel to attend the conference, which was announced Friday in occupied Jerusalem by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin. The favourable vote came despite fears by some in the government — the most right-wing in Israel's history — that the conference would force Israel to withdraw from occupied territories. Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a close ally of Mr. Shamir, said

Jordan welcomes Israel's decision

AMMAN (R) — Jordan Sunday became the first Arab country to welcome Israel's decision to attend Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid on Oct. 30. With this (Israeli acceptance), all the parties to the talks have agreed to attend and the convening of the conference has become a reality," Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif told Reuters. "We hope this will be the beginning towards laying the basis of a true peace in the region," Mr. Sharif added.

the conference will provide "a very serious and meaningful opportunity for peace negotiations... between Israel and each one of its Arab partners." Interior Minister Arye Deri, who voted for attending, said he believed a U.S. letter of assurances negotiated over several months guarantees American support for Israel's demand that no Palestinian state be created. "Why should we block the way for any one of our children or citizens, to tell them there is no

chance for peace," he added. "This is the meaning of a vote against." Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, the most outspoken opponent of the conference in Mr. Shamir's Likud Bloc, said the cabinet was not holding firmly to Israel's refusal to cede occupied land to the Arabs. "We capitulated. We did not stick to any of our demands," he said. "Not a thing remains of

Hostage, detainees to be freed

BEIRUT (AP) — An American hostage is expected to be released within 24 hours, the United Nations information office here announced in a statement Sunday.

A group of Arab prisoners jailed in the Israeli-controlled border zone in South Lebanon will also be freed, said the statement released at 2 p.m. (1200 GMT). The statement came hours after Israel suggested that definitive proof that serviceman Josef Fink, missing in Lebanon since 1986, was dead, had broken a month-long deadlock in freeing prisoners and hostages. Uri Lubrani, Israel's chief hostage negotiator, said his government was "not ready to move without this information reaching us."


Ori Shonim, an Israeli attorney involved in the contacts, hinted Israel may now free more Arab detainees, a key demand by kidnappers holding the nine Western hostages in Lebanon. Security sources in the south, requesting anonymity, said a batch of Arab prisoners was expected to be released from Khiam

Three Israeli soldiers killed in Hizbollah blast

MARIYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Resistance fighters killed three Israeli soldiers with a South Lebanon bomb ambush Sunday.

Security sources said a bomb planted in the road exploded as an Israeli patrol passed on a hill about two kilometres east of the town of Nabatieh, setting armoured vehicles ablaze. Three Israeli soldiers were killed — the heaviest toll since an Israeli-guerrilla clash on July 17. Security sources said five Israelis were wounded. The Israeli army reported three dead and two wounded. The Islamic resistance, a coalition led by the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God), claimed responsibility. A Hizbollah statement said Sunday's attack was made to oppose a U.S. push to dominate the Middle East through the peace conference and showed guerrillas would fight on for Palestine. "The honourable strugglers continue the holy war against the Zionist invaders and are trying with their strong hands and steel will to stand in the face of the plans of international blasphemy and its conspiracies," the Hizbollah statement said. "These strugglers are also pro-

ving that the threads of this conspiracy are thinner than a spider's web, that the resistance is able with the help of God to continue this path of struggle," it added. The Hizbollah statement said two vehicles were destroyed and all inside were killed. It estimated the Israeli dead and wounded at 15. The ambush took place on the edge of the anti-resistance buffer strip which Israel and its local allies control across South Lebanon. Israeli troops and helicopters combed surrounding hills for hours after the blast. The bomb exploded when two Israeli armoured personnel carriers were passing through the area as part of "routine operational activity," the Israeli army said. Three soldiers were killed in the blast and two others wounded. One suffered serious injuries and another was slightly wounded, it said. The names of the victims were not released. The soldiers belonged to the Golani Brigade, Israel Radio said. The army statement said Israel's Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and the head of the army's northern command, Yitzhak Mordechai, arrived in the area and questioned soldiers and officers.



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Israel's nuclear arsenal far larger than suspected

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Israel possesses a nuclear weapons arsenal far larger than the United States has suspected and has gone on full nuclear alert three times in the past, according to a new book.

"The Samson Option," by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, was to be published Sunday. The New York Times reported on the book Sunday.

Mr. Hersh writes that Israel now possesses 300 or more nuclear warheads mounted on artillery shells, in land mines in the occupied Golan Heights and on missiles. Israel also has hundreds of low-yield neutron warheads — weapons designed to kill people but leave property undamaged, he says.

U.N. intelligence estimates Israel has fewer than 100 weapons, the Times reported.

"America's policy towards the Israeli arsenal was not just one of benign neglect; it was a conscious policy of ignoring reality," Mr. Hersh wrote.

Mr. Hersh also says the Israelis have gone on full nuclear alert — meaning nuclear missiles were wheeled out of silos and put on launchers — three times: twice during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and once this year when Israel was under attack by Iraq.

Israel has never acknowledged that it possesses nuclear weapons, although the United States and other countries have long maintained it does.

Other authors have written about Israel's nuclear programme, but the Times said many of Mr. Hersh's specific allegations are new. The newspaper said it interviewed officials and experts in the

United States who corroborated Mr. Hersh's allegations.

Among them:

— The Israelis built a false control room and other fake sites to trick American inspectors into believing they were being used solely as a research facility.

— Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard passed information to Israel for four years, not the 18 months that prosecutors alleged at his trial. He also passed on far more secret data than prosecutors alleged. Mr. Pollard was convicted of spying for Israel in 1987.

— Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir gave Moscow sanitised versions of American intelligence documents that had been given to Israel by Mr. Pollard.

The documents were turned over directly to Yevgeny Primakov, the Soviet foreign ministry specialist on Middle Eastern affairs.

Most of the account of the nuclear programme's early history is supported by declassified U.S. documents. Mr. Hersh's account of more recent events relies more heavily on officials he did not identify.

Mr. Hersh was a reporter for the Times from 1972 to 1979. He is now a contract employee in the Times' Washington bureau.

Mr. Hersh, quoting Israeli and U.S. officials who discussed the matter with him, says Israel's central strategic doctrine during the 1970s and much of the 1980s was that the Soviet Union should know that it was under the threat of Israeli nuclear attack.

Mr. Hersh wrote that Israel used U.S. satellite reconnaissance photographs and other intelligence data to target Soviet cities, the newspaper said. Some

of the material was obtained openly and some of it illegally, the newspaper said.

He said Israel has tactical and strategic weapons, including more than 100 nuclear artillery shells and nuclear landmines in the Golan Heights, and hundreds of low-yield neutron warheads capable of destroying large numbers of enemy troops.

The Israeli government's general response to the reports in Mr. Hersh's book was to restate the formulation it always offers when asked about its nuclear programme.

"Israel is not going to be the first to introduce nuclear arms in the Middle East," the newspaper quoted Israeli defence ministry spokesman Danny Navah as saying.

The New York Times reported that Mr. Hersh also made these assertions in the book:

— Successive U.S. presidents, with the exception of John F. Kennedy, did little to restrain the Israeli programme, afraid of adverse electoral repercussions.

— In the 1950s and 1960s, the French government sent hundreds of scientists and engineers to help the Israelis build their underground nuclear complex at Dimona. While it was generally known the French provided assistance, Mr. Hersh wrote that the level of their assistance was far greater than U.S. analysts had previously thought.

— The strategic doctrine behind the targeting was that Soviet intelligence agents would learn of the nuclear threat and that as a result Soviet leaders would limit their military aid to Arab allies in the time of war.

Senior GCC official to attend Madrid talks

BAHRAIN (R) — Abdullah Bishara, secretary general of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), said Sunday he would attend the Middle East peace conference in Madrid this month as an observer.

"An invitation has been extended for me to represent the GCC as an observer... I will be there on Oct. 28," Mr. Bishara told Reuters by telephone from GCC headquarters in Riyadh.

"My role is a historic opportunity and by being there we will send a strong signal that the GCC is willing to do its best to push the peace process forward," he said.

The members of the economic and defence alliance are Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Bishara said he was unable to comment further on the GCC role in the talks, which are expected to have three phases — an opening session, bilateral talks between Israel and key Arab delegations, then broader discussions with other Arab states.

But Gulf-based diplomats said Saudi Arabia, the dominant member of the alliance, had indicated it was willing to participate in multilateral talks with Israel on arms control and water rights.

Those talks are part of stage three of the conference and are scheduled to begin on Nov. 13, the diplomats said.

The GCC would not participate in bilateral talks between Israel and frontline Arab states due to begin four days after the opening session, they said.

"Details have not been worked out but it is conceivable the GCC will send Mr. Bishara to the multilateral talks as well as some states attending individually — Saudi Arabia is the only GCC state which has confirmed it is coming," one diplomat said.

Diplomats in the region say Saudi Arabia has played a major behind-the-scenes role in bringing



Abdullah Bishara

other Arab states to the conference table and would continue to help iron out sticking points with Syria and Egypt, its allies during the Gulf war.

The kingdom ended a freeze on Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) assets after the Palestine National Council voted in Algiers last month to back U.S. efforts to convene a conference, the diplomats said.

The assets, mainly taxes on the salaries of Palestinians working in the kingdom, were frozen last year in retaliation for Palestinian support for Iraq in the Gulf crisis.

Yasser Arafat's photograph appeared in Saudi newspaper on Sunday for the first time since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Diplomats said individual GCC states had also been invited to attend the opening session of the conference on Oct. 30 but it was unlikely they would come.

Bahrain was the only member to announce it had received an invitation Saturday.

Brunner to head U.N. team to peace conference

UNITED NATIONS (R) — In his first comments on the Middle East peace conference slated for Madrid, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar named a small team to attend the meeting despite dissatisfaction with the U.N.'s observer status.

He also complimented U.S. Secretary of State James Baker for bringing the conference scheduled for Oct. 30 to fruition.

"I am very happy that the conference is taking place and I am in admiration of what Mr. Baker has done over the months," he said. "I think it is a remarkable success."

He said he would send Edouard Brunner, Switzerland's ambassador to the United States, as his representative to the meeting at which the United Nations is relegated to observer status, a situation he criticised earlier.

Asked if he was content with the U.N. role, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said only, "I have been asked to send a special representative as an observer and he will contribute if necessary to the success of the conference."

He said Mr. Brunner, appointed last March as his envoy for the Middle East, would take a small team "in order to be present during the inauguration of the conference."

The U.N. chief said on Sept. 20 U.N. observer status at a Middle East conference was "insufficient and unfair."

He said that the United Nations should not be going to the



Edouard Brunner

conference on the same footing as the European Community because "one is a regional organisation and the other one is an international organisation."

Israel, which says it distrusts the United Nations, objects to a large U.N. role as being loaded against it.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar believes that any resolution of the conflict must be on the basis of Security Council's landmark Resolution 242, which called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 Middle East war and acknowledgement of the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure boundaries.

Iraq says harvest to satisfy fraction of basic food needs

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, hard hit by U.N. sanctions and Gulf war bombing that devastated its agriculture, said Sunday that next year's harvest would satisfy only 10 per cent of its basic food needs.

Agriculture Minister Abdul Wahab Mahmoud Al Sabbagh said the March/April harvest would be about 30 per cent of normal or about a tenth of what Iraq needed in staples in an average year.

Sanctions "even interfere with the way we breathe. It is really very unfair," he told Reuters in an interview.

"Not more than two per cent to our food needs is being bought, and that is by traders and by smuggling."

The minister foresaw food shortages and hardship for the nation of 18 million people.

He said Iraq had \$4 billion of assets overseas but these had been frozen as part of the United Nations embargo imposed as punishment for its invasion of Kuwait. "We don't have money to import food," he said.

The terms of the sanctions allowed Iraq to import certain foods — wheat, rice, sugar, tea and cooking oil — but these were a fraction of its requirements and excluded spare parts and farming inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and animal vaccines.

"It's ridiculous not to be allowed to import machinery and spare parts," Mr. Sabbagh said.

He said private traders with access to hard currency and smugglers were bringing in about 1,000 tonnes a month for sale on the free market, where prices were doubled and tripled in recent months.

In a normal year, Iraq needs about 7.5 million tonnes of wheat, barley, maize, soya, protein and other cereals.

Iraq was about 30 per cent self-sufficient in such cereals and was working towards total self-sufficiency in five years before the Gulf crisis triggered by its invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990.

Mr. Sabbagh dismissed U.N. Resolution 706, which would allow the Baghdad authorities to sell crude oil worth \$1.6 billion to pay war reparations and buy essential imports under strict U.N. supervision.

"They (U.N. monitors) will decide if (imports) are needed. They want to bring people in to watch. They even interfere with how we breathe," he said.

The Iraqi government has shown no sign of accepting the terms, and President Saddam Hussein has said the country can live under sanctions for 20 years "without asking anything from anyone."

Mr. Sabbagh said Iraq's agriculture had been wrecked by Gulf war bombing which he said hit roads, bridges, dams, pumping stations and water regulation plants in land reclamation projects as well as livestock.

Iraqi Kurds and Turks hold secret meeting

DOHUK (R) — Massoud Barzani, one of two key Iraqi Kurdish leaders, held secret talks in northern Iraq Saturday with a top emissary of Turkish President Turgut Ozal and a U.S. State Department official, Kurdish sources said.

They said the talks took place in the town Zawita while crowd of 60,000 Kurds waited in nearby Dohuk to be addressed by Mr. Barzani, on the road to lobby support for a peace and autonomy deal he has negotiated with the government.

While the meeting was taking place, eight Turkish soldiers held captive by rebel Turkish Kurds were turned over to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Zakho, 40 kilometres north of Dohuk.

Turkey said seven of its soldiers captured on Aug. 5 had been freed by the rebels Saturday. General elections were taking place in Turkey Sunday and the release of the soldiers was clearly timed to have maximum impact.

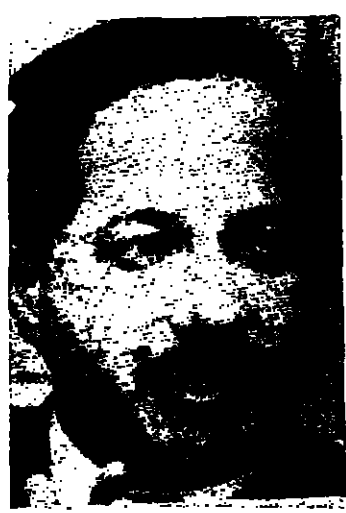
Details of the Barzani-Turkish talks were not revealed but Iraqi Kurds have protested to Turkey over cross-border raids by Turkish troops against bases of the autonomy-seeking Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

Iraqi Kurds say civilians were wounded in the Turkish raids. Turkey denies it.

Mr. Barzani, chief of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of two major Iraqi guerrilla factions in Kurdistan, was making his first visit to Dohuk since a post-Gulf war rebellion against the government collapsed at the end of March.

He was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd that jammed the city's streets when he arrived late on Saturday morning.

After entering the headquar-



Massoud Barzani

ters of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front shortly before noon, he left by back door and headed for the secret meeting in Zawita while a noisy crowd of supporters waited for him in front of the building, Kurdish sources said.

The talks with the Turkish delegation lasted for two hours.

Mr. Barzani is under pressure from veteran Kurdish nationalist Jalal Talabani, his chief rival for the hearts and minds of Iraq's Kurds.

The KDP leader, whose family has been at the forefront of the Kurdish nationalist struggle for two generations, brought his draft autonomy agreement back from Baghdad in mid-August.

Mr. Talabani, who heads the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is openly critical of Mr. Barzani's draft agreement, saying it surrendered Kurdish land and freedom.

Negotiations with Baghdad have been brought to a standstill because of the differences between the two men, key members of the Kurdistan Front umbrella alliance.

Pollution experts to meet in Dubai

DUBAI (R) — Pollution experts from Gulf Arab countries will gather in Dubai this week for a major environment conference to discuss the air and sea pollution caused by the Gulf war which ended in February.

The two-day conference, which starts Tuesday, has been organised by the Gulf Area Oil Companies Mutual Aid Organisation (GOACMAO), set up in the 1970s to exchange information and cooperate on pollution problems.

The participants will discuss the pollution situation in the Gulf and ways to fight oil fires and protect desalination plants from oil pollution.

"We have a strong line-up of speakers," Richard Atkinson of Dubai Petroleum Company, current chairman of GOACMAO, said Sunday.

The executive committee of GOACMAO, which brings together 10 major oil companies on the Arab side of the Gulf, will hold its routine quarterly meeting in Dubai Monday, he added.

Iraq, accused of devastating marine life and damaging hundreds of kilometres of the Gulf coast, faces expulsion from GOACMAO — but only because it has not paid its membership fees.

Millions of barrels of crude oil were dumped in the water and hundreds of oilwells were set ablaze in Kuwait in February.

Mr. Atkinson said Iraq had until Nov. 17 to pay its dues or face automatic expulsion from the group. There has been no contact with Iraq since it invaded Kuwait, another GOACMAO member, in August 1990.

Iraq, which has the longest shoreline on the Gulf coast, is not a member of GOACMAO.

U.N. official says Sudan food deal partly blocked

NAIROBI (R) — A senior U.N. official said Saturday that the Sudanese government and rebels were moving towards agreement on a series of land routes to give safe passage for food aid in the southern war zone.

But U.N. Under-Secretary James Jonah said a full deal on the relief routes was blocked by a splinter group within the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) which objected to the agreement because it was not given a say in it.

After talks with government and mainstream SPLA representatives in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, Mr. Jonah told reporters that both sides accepted in principle the U.N.'s plans for a series of land routes in the south — where more than one million people are suffering the effects of war and drought.

Lain Akol, one of the leaders of a faction which split from SPLA chief John Garang in August, was angry at not being invited to take part in Saturday's talks. Mr. Jonah said Mr. Akol had told him later that his group would not accept what had been agreed.

And the government would not fully agree to the deal unless the splinter faction gave the go-ahead.

Mr. Jonah, who was travelling to Sudan Sunday for a three-day visit, suggested the agreement in principle would be enough to boost the use of land routes.

He said deals could be worked out with the splinter group on the

ground and added that while this group controlled enough territory to be able to disrupt relief convoys, he hoped it would not do so.

"We're going on the assumption that if anyone obstructs the relief routes, we'll speak out against them," he said. Mr. Jonah argued that to have given U.N. recognition to the splinter group by inviting it to the talks could have angered the mainstream SPLA and jeopardised the talks completely.

So aid is already moving by road in the south but the U.N. wants a comprehensive deal to be able to plan for the approaching dry season when all the roads should be useable.

Relief work in the south, already fraught with problems because of the war, has been further complicated by the SPLA split. The splinter group accused Colonel Garang of human rights abuses and of behaving like a dictator.

The SPLA controls large tracts of the south. It has fought for eight years against what it sees as domination of the mainly Christian and animist south by the Muslim Arab north.

More than seven million people are at risk from starvation this year throughout Sudan. The U.N. World Food Programme's director in Khartoum, Trevor Page, said half a million tonnes of food aid had been delivered to them so far this year, averting a "catastrophe."

Aoun fires off fresh attack against Hrawi government

PARIS (R) — Exiled Lebanese General Michel Aoun has touched off a potential row by dubbing Lebanon's Syrian-backed leaders as "collaborators," a term used in France for those who served the wartime Nazis.

He spoke in a television programme screened Sunday when Lebanese President Elias Hrawi arrived in Paris for a two-day official visit.

The remarks in his first filmed interview since going into exile were expected to embarrass France and focus anger on the privately-owned La Cinq television channel.

A Syrian-led assault on east Beirut toppled rebel General Aoun a year ago, after bitter fighting, and he sheltered in France's embassy in Beirut.

He was granted political asylum in France two months ago on condition that he refrain from political statements.

But he granted a spate of interviews to newspapers on his arrival and was publicly rebuked by French authorities on Sep. 6. He had been silent since then.

"One has never before seen a patriot (like himself) cited before the courts while the 'collaborators' are in power (in Lebanon) as they are in this case," he said in the interview in his closely-guarded villa outside Marseille. It was shown to Reuters Saturday.

"What is seen as a virtue in the entire world (patriotism) is considered a vice where Lebanon is concerned... where the 'collaborators' are internationally recognised," Gen. Aoun said.

Gen. Aoun, who speaks flawless French, presumably knows the term "collabo," coined during the 1940-1944 German occupation to describe those who helped the Nazis, is an emotionally-charged expression in French.

He told La Cinq there was a "plot" to maintain international silence about Lebanon's plight but he would strive for the "recovery of Lebanon's sovereignty and liberty."

and was publicly rebuked by French authorities on Sep. 6. He had been silent since then.

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JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	News in French
18:15	Weekly Sports Magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Hey Dad
21:10	The Midas Touch
22:00	News in English
22:30	Cable Five
PRAYER TIMES	
04:17	Fajr
05:39	Sunrise (Doha)
11:22	Dhuhr
14:32	'Asr
17:02	Maghrib
18:19	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810740	
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
St. John the Baptist Church Tel. 661757	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625441	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 62543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771531	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 771531	
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623624, 649932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be fair and winds will be southerly moderate, freshening at times. In Aqaba, it will be dusty with northerly fresh winds and calm seas.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	16 / 29
Aqaba	22 / 31
Dhahran	16 / 31
Jordan Valley	24 / 36
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 28, Aqaba 35. Humidity readings: Amman 46 per cent, Aqaba 27 per cent.	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Issam Al Azzam	890304
Dr. Wael Kharrabi	665917
Dr. Walid Salameh	779977
Dr. Abdul Aziz Tahoun	783708
First pharmacy	661912
Farid's pharmacy	778336
Al Azzam pharmacy	637055
Natash's pharmacy	623672
Al Salem pharmacy	636780
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsi's pharmacy	637660
IRBID:	
Dr. Sakhr Al Mnted	(-)
Al Shams' pharmacy	275252
ZARQA:	
Dr. Khamis Al Janbari	(-)
Khalifa pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Fire Brigade	892228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	943402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	603800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	
Abdullah Telephone Repairs	623101
Jordan Telephone	661101
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	06-53200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport	06-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hamid Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn.	642816
Akshid Maternity, J. Amn.	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mathias, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shamsi	641714
Shamsi's Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musayyid Hospital	667277
The Islamic, Abdull	666127/57
Al-Ahli, Abdull	644146
Islamic, Al-Musayyid	771813
Al-Bashir, J. Admari	775112/6
Army, Marika	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/20
Amal Hospital	674153
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)905560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)225555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)222755
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Hayat Hospital	(03)341111
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
08:00	Sanaa (RJ)
09:00	Dammam (RJ)
09:15	Riyadh (RJ)
09:15	Jeddah (RJ)
09:30	Dhahran (RJ)
09:45	Larnaca (RJ)
09:50	Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:25	Beirut (RJ)
10:25	Bangkok (RJ)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:15	Beirut (RJ)
11:30	Moscow New York (RJ)
11:40	Istanbul (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
12:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
13:00	Cairo (RJ)
14:30	Yamoubo (RJ)
20:30	Beirut, Doha (RJ)
20:45	Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15	Moscow (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:15	Beirut (ME)
13:05	Cairo (MS)
MARKET PRICES	
Upward price in \$/kg	
Apple	750 / 300
Banana	500 / 450
Banana (Minkamur)	550 / 500
Banana	580 / 500
Cabbage	170 / 120
Cauliflower	250 / 200
Cauliflower (large)	150 / 100
Cauliflower (small)	350 / 300
Eggplant	220 / 180
Garlic	380 / 300
Garlic	300 / 250
Garlic (dry)	150 / 120
Garlic (wet)	250 / 200
Pepper (green)	400 / 350
Pepper (red)	300 / 250
Potato	600 / 500
Spinach	220 / 180
Spinach (wet)	250 / 200
Tomato	220 / 180
Watermelon	150 / 40

Improving seed technology discussed as way to increase agricultural output

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 30 delegates from 13 Arab and foreign countries gathered in Amman Sunday for a regional training seminar entitled "Seed Technology Course" which opened at the University of Jordan.

University President Pawzi Gharaibeh who opened the session underlined the importance of the topics to be discussed and said that the seminar aims to improve food production in the participating countries. Making available amounts of seeds, providing skillful expertise and providing other facilities are important elements for successful agricultural production, Dr. Gharaibeh said.

To train seed technologists, a seed technology unit has been set up within the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Jordan, something which reflects the university's eagerness to offer services that benefit the community, said Dr. Gharaibeh. University officials said the unit not only aims to train Jordanians but also seed technologists from the west



Seminar participants at the University of Jordan discuss seed technology. Participants from 13 countries are reviewing methods of increasing food production (Petra photo)

Asia and North Africa region. The seminar is sponsored by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

The participants will have theoretical as well as practical training at the laboratories of the seed technology unit and will make field trips to a number of agricultural projects in Jordan.

Countries taking part in the seminar include Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, Turkey, Tunisia, Qatar, Uganda and Yemen as well as Jordan.

Queen Noor returns from promotional trip to Italy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor returned home Sunday following a two-day working visit to Italy during which she inaugurated a campaign organised by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to promote Italian tourism to Jordan.

During Queen Noor's visit, Italian television aired a one-hour prime time special programme on tourism in Jordan, including an interview with Queen Noor.

In the interview, the Queen highlighted Jordan's touristic and archeological attractions and promoted Jordan as a peaceful and stable country. Queen Noor also paid tribute to the longstanding relations between Jordan and Italy and expressed hope for continued cooperation in the fields of tourism.

The Tourism Ministry's current campaign to attract tourists to Jordan comes as a result of the sharp decline in tourism following the Gulf crisis. In Italy, the Ministry of Tourism is holding three workshops for Italian tour operators and a number of Jordanian handicraft and mosaic exhibits.

In April 1991, Queen Noor opened the Madaba Mosaic Exhibition at Bergamo, Italy. Ministry of Tourism reports indicate that 3,000 to 4,000 Italian tourists are expected to visit Jordan in October and November 1991.

Queen Noor was accompanied on her visit by Tourism and Antiquities Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti and Liela Sharaf, a Parliament member.

Officials conclude agreement with Libya to employ 2,000 Jordanian workers

ZARQA (J.T.) — Jordan has concluded an agreement with Libya under which the latter would employ 2,000 Jordanians, 1,300 of whom are engineers and the rest are teachers and vocational training instructors, according to an announcement by Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughni.



Abdul Karim Al Dughni

Mr. Dughni, who recently visited Libya for talks on the employment of Jordanian doctors and engineers among other skilled workers, said that he was planning to visit Yemen for a similar purpose and help find work for unemployed Jordanians.

The minister made the statement at a ceremony held to graduate a new batch of trainees from a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) unit in Zarqa.

The minister had earlier received a five-member Libyan delegation which arrived in Amman Saturday to conclude agreements for the employment of Jordanians. During the five-day visit, the Libyan team members will tour a number of VTC centres and discuss with government officials matters related to workers, training and employment.

Libya, which already employs Jordanian doctors and other skilled workers, will allow the Jordanians to transfer 50 per cent of

Referring to government measures to help solve the unemployment problem, the minister said that his ministry was trying to find work for the skilled workers abroad and has established the Development and Employment Fund to finance small-sized projects for heads of families. The ministry is also offering training in various trades to Jordanian graduates of schools and universities, offering them the chance to obtain work and earn a living.

The graduation ceremony was held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, who later distributed the diplomas to the 230 graduates. The trainees had undertaken courses in industrial tailoring, dress making, auto mechanics repair, carpet weaving, t-shirt and hair dressing and flower arrangement skills.

The Princess distributed awards to those excelling in their studies.

Princess Basma received a gift from the graduates and a shield from Zarqa Chamber of Commerce President Ibrahim Takiuddin.

Among those attending the ceremony was the governor of Zarqa and several Parliament members.

Eight people killed in road accidents

AMMAN (Petra) — Eight people were killed and 183 others injured in 407 traffic accidents which took place in the Kingdom in the period between Oct. 5 till Oct. 12, 1991, according to Traffic Department sources.

The sources said Amman governorate had the most accidents with a total of 209 accidents, followed by Zarqa Governorate with 17 accidents, then Irbid 16, Mafrq 11, Aqaba 8, Madaba 6, Balqa 5 and Karak with one accident.

Housing Corporation to build 275 new units near Marka

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Housing Corporation Sunday awarded a local construction firm a contract to set up 275 housing units to be built at Marka in eastern Amman and said that work on the project was expected to begin early next month.

Corporation Director Yusef Hiyasat said that the housing project, expected to be completed in three years, would cost JD 3.1 million.

The housing units will be cre-

ated within 22 buildings which will have flats of various sizes ranging 143 square metres to 85 square metres, said Mr. Hiyasat. The Housing Corporation will take charge of all the basic services and infrastructure such as roads, electricity and sewage works in addition to a public park for the housing estate, he added.

The Housing Corporation has not yet announced the prices of each category but will do that in the coming few months. The cor-

poration will also, open the way for would-be beneficiaries to start saving up with the corporation in monthly instalments to save for the advance payment for the units, Mr. Hiyasat said.

He added that expatriates would be welcome to apply for housing units in this project and would not be asked to meet a requirement of proving that they had been living in the Kingdom for three consecutive years to become eligible for a unit.

Professor traces evolution of architecture in Jordan

By Maha Addad
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Dr. Taleb Rifai, director of the Centre for Consultations and Studies and professor of architecture at the University of Jordan, said that architecture and building styles in Jordan can be used to document historic events.

In a presentation at the Centre for Studies and Research on Contemporary Middle East (CER-MOC) Thursday, Dr. Rifai showed a full-house of 50 people slides of Jordan in 1875 "before there was a single house built in Amman," and covering a period stretching to the present.

One example cited was the facade of the Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman which shows how people of different eras built and altered the architecture that was already there. "The facade was once part of a Roman temple, then part of a Byzantine basilica. After that it became part of an Umayyad mosque. Today, it is the facade of the Hussein Mosque," Dr. Rifai said.

The presentation, which lasted for one hour, included slides showing the influence of the classical Ottoman era with their precise use of stone in building and decorating. It also indicated the building techniques that led to the expansion of Jordan westwards.

"By making use of stairways, houses were able to pour over the entire terrain of Jordan. There are stairs that can take one from Jabal Al Ashrafieh to downtown Amman in five minutes. Stairs also meant that buildings could follow curved and awkward patterns," Dr. Rifai said, emphasising his views that a city can be dealt with as a living organism that has "life, energy and movement. It reacts to events and

changes accordingly," he said. "Eventually," Dr. Rifai said, "buildings started to reflect the prestige of their occupants so that buildings with cornices and refined corners were owned by the elite."

According to Dr. Rifai, there came a time in architecture in Jordan when the "villa of Amman" was introduced. "Between 1925 and 1945, the prevalent type of buildings owned by the affluent were the symmetrical, classical types with the three bay structure and the ornamental designs on these bays," he said.

Dr. Rifai added that in 1948 there was a tremendous and shocking growth and modernisation with the influx of refugees from the West Bank.

Building structures kept developing there after, but it was in the 1950's that there was a complete change in the architectural scene.

"There was a complete abandonment of old architectural techniques in the 1950's. Westernisation and modernity in building became popular. For example, high storey buildings featuring blue and other colour shutters. Even places of worship usually resistant to change were slightly influenced with the patterns and ornamentations," he said.

The most recent change in architecture, said Dr. Rifai, started in the 1970's when there was an unprecedented economic boom in Jordan.

"Individualism in architecture was starting. What was different sold better," Dr. Rifai said.

"Different colour, form and even shape were more in demand. It was a complete change where even arches were built upside down and defying their own purpose altogether," he said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

★ Art exhibition by Abdul Rauf Shammout, Khalid Khreis and Mohammad Hussein Abdallah at Abdul Hussein Shammout Foundation Gallery (Open 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.)

★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artists Ismail Khayyat, Mohammad Abdallah, Khater Mohammad, Ali Mandilawi, Khalid Wahi, and Husein Ali at Baghdad Art Gallery (located at the beginning of Garden Street from Salfway).

★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Al Jalous at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Art exhibition by Fatwa Jalal Nabeul at the British Council.

★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Sina Ata at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition entitled "Sheikh Ibrahim — Johann Ludwig Burchard (1784-1917)" at the reception hall of the Royal Cultural Centre.

CONCERT

★ French film entitled "La Femme Infidèle" at the French Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.



Parliament member Mohammad Addoub Al Zaben (Left), flanked by other Jordanian delegates, attended the 86th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Chile.

Jordanian-Palestinian community in Chile backs King's stance on peace

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Palestinian community living in Chile has voiced its absolute support to His Majesty King Hussein's policies and his endeavour to arrive at a Middle East peace based on justice and the restoration of the Palestinian people's rights, according to Parliament member Mohammad Addoub Al Zaben.

Dr. Zaben, who led Jordan's parliamentary delegation to the 86th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference held in Chile, said that the 350,000-strong community there hoped that the peace process would put an end to Israel's expansionist policies

and end its occupation of Palestinian land.

Dr. Zaben, who has returned to Amman after attending the IPU meeting, said he held extensive meetings with community members in Santiago, Chile, on the sidelines of the IPU meetings, which discussed the Middle East along with a host of other world issues.

The Jordanian parliamentary delegation to the meetings distributed copies of the Jordanian White Paper to the community members who voiced their appreciation of the King's endeavours at the domestic and external fronts, said Dr. Zaben.

During meetings with other delegations to the conference, the Jordanian team of parliamentarians spoke in detail about the problems plaguing the Middle East and the consequences of the Gulf crisis on Jordan.

Dr. Zaben said the Jordanian delegation urged world parliamentarians to help Jordan deal with the economic crisis that ensued in the wake of the Gulf war and the return of hundreds of expatriates to the country. He said the delegation also explained Jordan's endeavours to reach peace based on U.N. Security Council resolutions.

UNFPA team continuing study of Jordan's population programmes

AMMAN (J.T.) — A team from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) is currently in Amman to conduct an assessment of population projects being implemented in the country and to help prepare and implement a national strategy in the field of population activities in Jordan.

The team met members of the National Population Commission (NPC) in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund (QAF), and Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughni to discuss these matters.

The U.N. team was briefed on the recommendations and the resolutions reached by the NPC at its conference here last month. For its part, the U.N. team reviewed with the commission their assessment of Jordan's population programmes.

The U.N. team voiced satisfac-

tion with Jordan's performance in reducing the mortality and fertility rates and its drive to expand population programmes.

The U.N. team had made recommendations which were conveyed to the NPC. These, the U.N. team said, concern matters related to mother and child health, family planning in Jordan and programmes involving Jordanian women in economic development fields among others.

The recommendations, which were included in the U.N. team's report, voiced appreciation of the NPC's efforts to link its activities with development schemes in Jordan. The UNFPA plans to provide support for the NPC to go ahead with plans, U.N. team sources said.

The NPC plans to conduct a population census and intends to carry out women-related programmes in cooperation with the UNFPA. The conference last

month was told that the population in Jordan now stands at 3,571,000 and is expected to reach 5,670,000 by the year 2005.

Delegates to the conference referred to the influx of some 300,000 expatriates and refugees from the Gulf countries. Princess Basma told the conference that the increase has caused severe pressure on Jordan's various services, creating new socio-economic difficulties like unemployment and sharply raising the cost of living in the Kingdom.

The NPC which is chaired by the labour minister, groups the secretaries general of the ministries of planning, awqaf and Islamic affairs, education, higher education and health in addition to the directors general of the Passports Department, the Civil Status Department, the Department of Statistics, representatives of QAF, the Armed Forces and Jordanian universities.

Minister reviews educational plan with UNESCO representative

PARIS (Petra) — Education Minister Eid Dahiyat Sunday discussed with Federico Mayor, director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Jordan's educational development plan and the programme currently being carried out in implementation of the National Education Development Conference resolutions.

The conference was held in September 1987 to look into the best ways and means to develop the educational process.

Dr. Dahiyat and Mr. Mayor also discussed the status of UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS).

Mr. Mayor said the office will continue to function in Amman and will cover such areas as culture, communication and regional educational programmes.



Eid Dahiyat

He voiced his organisation's readiness to implement projects on the restoration of Petra antiquities and will develop the national museum in Jordan.

Dr. Dahiyat is now in Paris to head UNESCO's 26th conference being held there.

Upon its opening, the conference elected Dr. Dahiyat as vice-chairman of the 26th session, thus giving Jordan the opportunity to participate actively in formulating the policy of the national conference and UNESCO policy for the next biennium.

Detainees to be freed

(Continued from page 1)

prison within the next two days. But they ruled out the possibility of any release Sunday.

An estimated 300 prisoners are held at the Khiam detention camp inside the zone Israel controls in South Lebanon.

Leading Shiite Muslim cleric Hassan Nasrallah said the hostage problem is totally separate from the Middle East peace process. That gained momentum this week with the announcement of an Oct. 30 conference in Madrid, Spain.

The U.N. statement did not say which of the five American captives in Lebanon would be freed or where. He would be the fourth Western captive to be released since August this year, fruits of an intensive U.N. effort to end the problem.

The others were Britons John McCarthy, a journalist, and Jack Mann, a former World War II pilot as well as American writer Edward Austin Tracy.

Lebanese state television, notoriously inaccurate as most of the local media on hostage stories, quoted unidentified sources as saying it would be either Joseph Cicippio or Jesse Turner.

The group holding him and fellow journalism professor Alan Steen invited Mr. Turner's Lebanese wife to come to Beirut with her daughter Joanne, to visit him for an hour under U.N. auspices.

That fuelled speculation he would be released.

Israel has said it will free Arab prisoners and make other concessions in return for definitive evidence of the whereabouts and welfare of its missing soldiers. Three Israeli servicemen are still missing in Lebanon, with a fourth, airman Ron Arad, listed as a prisoner of war.

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Weekly Political Pulse

Coordination is a prerequisite to success

By Waleed Sadi

AS the pace for holding the peace conference on the Middle East accelerates, the parties can be expected to be feverishly preparing themselves for negotiations. Jordan, which should concern us here most, could very well be in the midst of a concerted campaign to articulate its position and outline its objectives on the basis of a well defined issue that would be the backbone of the prospective negotiations with Tel Aviv. I presume that Amman's delegation or delegations have already been formed and their respective duties clearly spelled out. As the nature of any peace talks would be rather complex and intricate, the Jordanian side must have developed a clear vision of what may lie ahead in anticipation of the first and subsequent rounds of give and take negotiations on the basis of international law, U.N. resolutions and pragmatism. Yet, it is only natural that the negotiations between the two sides would get bogged somewhere, somehow down the line only to be kicked forward at the appropriate time.

At the outset, the leaders of the two respective delegations from Jordan and Israel would probably indulge themselves in long discourses on their visions for the future, with each side purporting to strive to make this region of the world the region of milk and honey. They are expected to articulate their own set of issues and disputes postulated on the basis of their own respective

priorities. One would assume that the broader terms of peace between the two countries would be first addressed in order to provide the overall umbrella for the subsequent detailed parts of the comprehensive peace formula that may bind the two sides for generations to come.

On the military level, Jordan is not in short supply of able military tacticians and strategists who can be expected to excel in safeguarding the military and security implications of any peace treaty that may come to fruition at the end of the line. Our economists and financial experts can also be expected to do well having done their home work much in advance. The hardest nut to crack would be the political dimensions of any futuristic peace accord between the two parties especially if, as anticipated, the Palestinian dimension would have to be addressed even in the context of the existing limited Jordanian-Israeli relations. This is obviously so because both Israel and Jordan know only too well that the resolution of the Palestinian conflict has got to be pursued in the context of the overall Israeli-Jordanian relations in the future. This is where complete coordination and synchronisation must be attained between Amman and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a matter of highest priority. One cannot see how peace between Tel Aviv and Amman can ever be

achieved in the absence of a successful and equitable settlement of the main thorny issue in the entire Arab-Israeli conflict. What could make or break the prospects of peace between Israel and Jordan is the Palestinian case. Accordingly everything that the Jordanian-Israeli negotiating teams could attain will remain in a state of limbo pending the resolution of the Palestinian question in all its dimensions and ramifications. No wonder the eyes are focused more than ever on the successful formation of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegations where optimum cooperation and harmonisation would be required.

The two Arab sides share a common destiny and converging interests in view of the geopolitical considerations that bind them together and the decades-long relations both prior to the unity that was forged between them in 1950 and after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The level of coordination achieved by the two Arab parties already suggested that both Palestinians and Jordanians are shouldering their responsibilities towards one another with sufficient degree of seriousness and far-sightedness. If such harmonisation of position could continue beyond the opening of the negotiating sessions with Israel, then the sky is the limit on what the two Arab peoples can do together to forge peace and a new foundation for permanent relations between them.

Israel can't have it all

U.S. SECRETARY of State James Baker went into great pains last Friday to assure Israel and the Jewish community in the U.S. of America's unyielding commitment to Israel's absolute security and edge over Arabs.

Mr. Baker has had to go out of his way to reiterate Washington's commitments to the safety and security of Israel following accusations both inside the Jewish state and the U.S. that the American administration was intent on making Israel withdraw from the Arab territories it occupied in 1967. On the same day Mr. Baker spoke in Israel, Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon charged that the U.S. and the West were trying to force Israel back into its 1967 borders. He said: "It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the intention of the present American government is to shoo Israel back into the impossible 1967 borders. Forcing Israel into these borders will lead to its destruction."

A day earlier the Jerusalem Post had reported that "Shamir aides, such as Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, have begun hinting that the U.S. intentions extend beyond a peace conference. He (Netanyahu) and others have suggested that the Bush administration wants Israel to be pushed back to the 1967 borders, including yielding East Jerusalem."

These charges by senior Israeli officials clearly point to an Israeli insistence not to give up an inch of Arab territory and especially not Jerusalem. Considering that the Arab and Palestinian first and foremost demand to establish peace with the Israelis is Israeli evacuation of "all" occupied Arab territories — including East Jerusalem — it is clear that some in the Israeli cabinet have been mobilising to sabotage the American effort at holding the peace conference.

The American administration, however, seems to be intent on not merely convening the peace conference, as some suggest, but is also determined to settle the conflict once and for all. It is also clear that the U.S., while fully committed to the safety and security of Israel, realises that real peace in the region can only be attained and maintained by the return of the occupied Arab territories and the attainment of legitimate Palestinian rights. Despite all the voices of rejection, Israel, like everybody else, is cornered this time. It has so far gotten away with most of the conditions that it has set for entering the peace conference, but it certainly cannot determine the conference's outcome in advance. Israel has always claimed it wanted to negotiate directly with its enemy. And if that is truly the case, the opportunity is here. This could be the last chance in a long time to come to rid the region of the possibility of a real and inevitable catastrophe. The moment of truth has finally arrived. Israel cannot manoeuvre with impunity anymore. It either wants peace or it does not. The coming few weeks will tell.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday focused attention on the peace process noting that it would be lengthy and faced with various obstacles. The long process of negotiations in Madrid is most likely to be encountering some sort of psychological warfare directed against the Arabs by the Israeli propaganda machine providing commentary and analysis designed at poisoning the atmosphere of the negotiations, warned the paper. It said that the Jordanian society should remain united behind the negotiators, giving them support and backing in all steps aimed at regaining Arab rights. The paper said that the official information service and the media in general can also offer meaningful backing for the process of making peace by providing information that would counter the Zionist campaigns and enemy designs. The paper cautioned members of the public against falling victim to enemy rumours designed to harm internal unity or weaken the position of the negotiators. It also cautioned against talking anti-government stands that can be most harmful to the national interest. Opposing the government's policies is something, but undermining the position of Jordanian negotiators at the peace conference is something else that can by no means be condoned, warned the paper. It said negotiations require perseverance and wisdom, backed by a united internal front from which the Jordanian people can and should afford under the present circumstances.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily criticised the way the official information services in Jordan have been handling matters related to public reactions to King Hussein's nationwide address in which he declared Jordan's acceptance to participate in the peace process. Fahd Al Fakih said that the Jordan News Agency, Petra, has been enlisting the views of the wrong people, who can by no means express meaningful views with regard to the peace process nor can reflect the opinions of the various political factions in the country. The way Petra was going about this matter, the writer said, indicates that the whole campaign was some sort of a tool to win support for an unacceptable policy or to stifle opposition to the government's policies. Fakih said one has to admit that there are people who support and others who oppose the peace process and reflecting the views of the opponents — especially politicians — is as important and necessary as presenting the views of the supporters of the peace process. The writer demanded that heads of parties with diverging views be consulted because they could be offering ideas about such important questions to be raised at the negotiations like the continued Jewish immigration and the billions of dollars in aid from America to settle them or the future of the Arab lands now under occupation. The writer said that the official information services should not overreact or go beyond the limits of what is reasonable and what could be expected so that the public would not be shocked should the negotiations fail to achieve fruitful results.

By Michael Sheridan

A middle-aged Israeli soldier was guarding the entrance to the Gaza Strip. He bent warily to scan the occupants of each Arab vehicle as an evening convoy of cars brought back the itinerant workers who labour in Israel by day and sleep in the tenements of Gaza at night.

His bow furrowed. The barrel of his Galil assault rifle came up just a fraction and he waved one battered old station wagon to a halt. Seven pairs of eyes peered out in anxious expectation. A look, a shrug, another wave of the Galil. "Yallah," the soldier said. They went.

Journalists, however, have to wait for clearance to cross into Gaza. So we made desultory conversation, the soldier was a family man doing his annual reserve duty and he was weary of its useless drudgery. "Just after the war in 1967," he recalled, "one of our brightest Israeli philosophers told people 'now you think that the conquered are suffering, but it is we the conquerors who will suffer.' Nobody knew what he was talking about, of course." He laughed. "Now we know, don't we?"

Only a few months ago, the men who run the Israeli government would have dismissed his rueful irony. Their ideal of Zionism appeared finally in the ascendant. It was the ruthless version of that creed elaborated by Vladimir Jabotinsky and embodied by Yitzhak Shamir, a politician who transformed himself from gunman to statesman over four decades.

Their right-wing bloc remains entrenched in office behind a fortress of religious votes in the Knesset, while a lacklustre left-wing opposition renders every impression of the British Labour Party's plight at the zenith of Thatcherism.

"The Labour Party has not vanished," wrote a left-wing col-

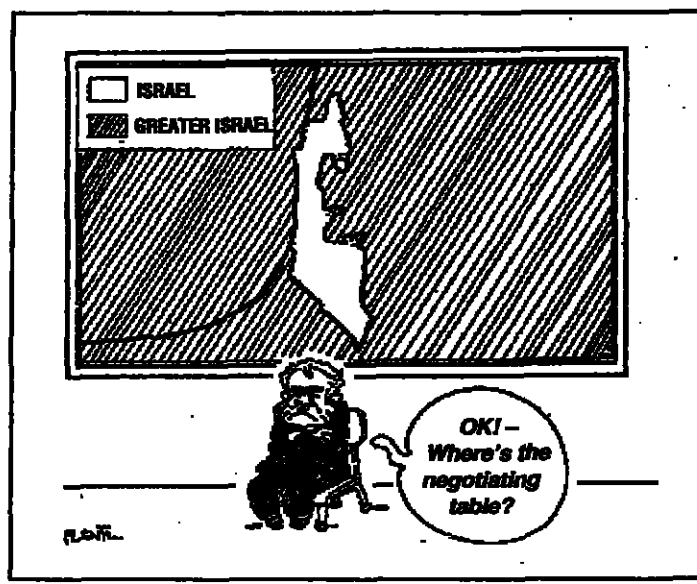
umnist recently. "It is just that the Israeli opposition is being run from the office of James Baker." Thus, the theory goes, the left shirks its role as domestic critic in the hopeful expectation that the American president and his secretary of state will defeat Mr. Shamir.

"Not only is this a forlorn hope. It denies Israelis the means of a debate we should be having," said one disgruntled Labour activist. For indeed, one reason Mr. Shamir and the radical right enjoy such a monopoly of public discourse is that leftists have all but ceased to challenge their attitudes.

But the malaise runs deeper than that. Opinion polls chart an inexorable decline in the Labour vote after three decades of hegemony. Some voters are drifting to smaller left-wing parties, and many more to the right. The influx of Soviet Jews is already revealing itself as an electoral bonus for the Likud and its nationalist allies. And Mr. Shamir, a man of 75 whose recreational reading consists of intelligence reports, is perhaps the most powerful Israeli prime minister since David Ben-Gurion.

He sits at the centre of an alliance that knits together moderate conservatives, extreme right-wingers and the ultra-orthodox religious. Carefully avoiding provocative statements, he leaves the ideological imperative of building of Jewish settlements to Ariel Sharon and the recent fervent anti-American rhetoric to the excitable fringe of his government.

But Mr. Shamir's command of domestic politics coincides with a shift in the relationship between Israel and its benefactor, America. Only now is it dawning on his entourage that the end of the Cold War signified a decline in Israel's importance as a strategic asset. Indeed, it stood revealed by the Gulf war as a liability to American interests in the Middle



East. From this development all else flows: diplomatic coercion, the chalking off of excess aid for Soviet Jews, unprecedented criticism in Washington of Israel's economy. This week a State Department consultant, Herbert Stein, told American Jewish fund-raisers to accept that U.S. aid to Israel would one day come to an end.

Mr. Shamir has had no choice but to accede to the wishes of President George Bush and Mr. James Baker. Israel will attend the peace conference. But he has managed with dogged effort to rob it of authority. It will have no power, he says, and Israel will prevent it holding more than one ceremonial meeting. Everybody else thinks that it is to be based on U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israel to withdraw from the Arab land it occupied in 1967 in exchange for peace. Mr. Shamir and his government simply reject the concept.

The last U.S. secretary of state to draw Israel into negotiations with more than one Arab power was Henry Kissinger, who left an acid portrait of Israeli diplomacy.

He wrote: "Israel's domestic political procedures explain its maddening negotiating method, which is to haggle over even the slightest concession, never to make an unexpected compromise and to settle only when everyone has reached a state of exhaustion that deprives the conclusion of exaltation or even goodwill."

Mr. Baker, now on his eighth pilgrimage between the antagonistic capitals of the Levant, has experienced this system to the full — and his conference has not yet even assembled for an opening session.

The internal balance of power is firmly set against "pragmatic" members of the cabinet — the foreign minister, David Levy, the justice minister, Dan Meridor, and the health minister, Elrud Olmert.

These younger Likud ministers might prove more flexible. But in any test of cabinet the two pivotal figures in the regime, Mr. Shamir himself and the defence minister Moshe Arens, will incline to the traditional Likud hard position.

So, although the radical right of the cabinet complains at length — not enough money for settle-

ments, too few Palestinians being shot for stone-throwing (an on-the-record pronouncement by one minister), imminent capitulation to the "anti-Semitic" George Bush — both they and Mr. Shamir know that this is a mutually advantageous game.

It allows the prime minister to point with dismay to his truculent extremists whenever the United States presses for concessions. It permits him simultaneously to manipulate the most dedicated drive to keep control of the occupied territories since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Ariel Sharon is the key figure in this effort. The former conqueror of Lebanon is now the minister of housing, in which capacity he has displayed an energy quite out of character with Israeli government bureaucracy. Rapid building in the West Bank, entire new roads slicing across Palestinian land to link settlements, the covert purchase of Arab homes in old Jerusalem and the provocative occupation of houses in the neighbouring Palestinian village of Silwan — all bear his imprimatur. "Do you think that I do anything without the prime minister's approval?" Mr. Sharon told an Israeli interviewer recently. "Of course I do not."

The rightist policy on the eve of Mr. Baker's "peace conference" seems confident and, apparently, impervious to domestic challenge. Israel will keep all the occupied lands. The Palestinians will be offered "autonomy" in running local affairs while Jewish settlement goes on and military occupation stays in place. If a limited peace with Syria comes about, perhaps with tiny territorial adjustments on the Golan Heights, well and good. If not, then the most powerful army and air force in the Levant stand ready.

Of course, nothing said or written in the Arab World is shaking the conviction in Israel that the majority of Arabs have not

accepted the existence of a Jewish state in their midst. The result is that while many Israelis do not exactly warm to Mr. Shamir, they feel secure with him.

The critical issue facing Israel — its continued occupation of an area that contains 1.75 million rebellious Palestinians — seldom raises more than a tired recital of spent passions in parliament or the press. Most Israelis prefer to worry about everyday problems of mortgages and schools than to contemplate the every day reality of life there: shootings, beatings, detentions, stabbings, lynchings, theft, intimidation, bullying, corruption and fraud, all committed by Jew upon Arab, Arab upon Jew and, increasingly, by Arab upon Arab. It is as if its indifference itself has grown indifferent.

Such is Mr. Shamir's bleak vision of the Land of Israel. The gunmen were warned of this fate by their great opponent, Chaim Weizmann, whose speech at the Zionist Congress in Basel in 1946 still resounds with a passion that the Labour Party has long abandoned in embarrassment. "If you think of bringing the redemption nearer by un-Jewish methods, if you lose faith in hard work and better days, then you commit idolatry and endanger what we have built," the old man stormed. "Would that I had a tongue of flame, the strength of prophets, to warn you against the paths of Babylon and Egypt. 'Zion shall be redeemed in judgment' — and not by any other means."

This week Binyamin Begin, 48, son of the former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, announced he will stand for the premiership when Mr. Shamir steps down. The torch will thus be passed on. To the radical Israeli right, Mr. Shamir's rule, and Mr. Begin's candidacy, are a vindication of the violent brand of Zionism espoused in the Forties by the Irgun and the Stern gang. It is hardly an auspicious opening for a peace conference. — The Independent

Algerians grab chance to air problems

By John Baggeley
Reuter

ALGIERS — From the scattered communities of its southern Saharan sands to the crowded Mediterranean coastal cities, Algeria's citizens are speaking out.

They suffered three decades of secretive central rule. Now they are grabbing the chance to openly air their grievances in a country heading into a new democratic era.

For years the only voice was that of the National Liberation Front (FLN) which spoke rarely and was seldom self-critical.

The change in this nation of 25 million people is dramatic. Today, from Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali, in charge of a delicate experiment to introduce democracy, down to ordinary citizens writing letters of protest, Algeria's sores are being exposed to the light.

"Each day, I learn more of people's difficulties... hundreds of concrete cases are put to me," Mr. Ghozali said recently.

Apart from giving figures for an economy which he terms catastrophe, he is specific on problems blighting the life of the man and woman in the street.

"Homeless families occupying schools which can no longer take in pupils."

"Increasingly dilapidated hospitals where the sick lack everything and whose relatives not only have to provide their food but also their medicines and sometimes their bedding."

"Schools deteriorating in quality and quantity where classes

exceed 50 children and which cannot halt growing illiteracy."

More the stuff of opposition politicians than a prime minister. But he is reflecting what is appearing in an increasingly aggressive press — a deluge of political commentaries and unprecedented open debate.

Complaints proliferate about recent bread shortages, lack of water, inflation — expected to hit 30 per cent this year — a devalued dinar, inadequate transport, dirty streets, disease, mismanagement.

The malaise, but not the outlet, long preceded Mr. Ghozali. Suppressed discontent over poverty and a sense of hopelessness brought riots to the streets of the capital in October 1988.

The bloodshed, 159 dead according to official figures, marked the start of the end of a monopoly on power by the FLN which ran a one-party state from 1962 when Algeria became independent from France.

President Chadli Benjedid opened the way for other parties to be formed. The flood that followed — 53 registered parties, if not a record at least a plethora — apparently reflected the desire for change.

The panaceas they propose range from a Muslim fundamentalist state under Sharia law, branch of the biggest opposition party, the Islamic Salvation Front, the rampant free enterprise.

The ideas are widely discussed by a growing media.

The independent newspaper El Watan celebrated its first

anniversary earlier this month, as yet another newspaper, Le Matin, appeared on the news stands, making up around a dozen French and Arabic language dailies in the capital.

Mr. Ghozali has been in power only four months, running a transitional government to get general elections rescheduled after they were derailed by Islamic unrest in June, and to try to kick-start the debt-burdened economy.

His accusations inevitably point a finger at the FLN whose governments he once served as a minister.

Last weekend schoolchildren from the capital's oldest area, the Casbah, held a sit-in to ask when they could have their school back. It was taken over by the homeless from an earthquake back in October 1989. How much longer, they demanded.

The official Algerian News Agency APS earlier this month reported how foreign doctors had packed up and left the eastern region of Bordj-Bou Arreridj after their tour of duty ended. This left one specialist local surgeon to cope with 500,000 people in an area only some 210 kilometres (130 miles) from the capital, it said.

In the capital, the almost bare and dusty windows of some pharmacies give scant hope to those trying to buy medicines to take to the sick. El Moudjahid, mouthpiece of the FLN, in an inquiry in August showed that besides shortages of imports, many medicines lay in the docks unclaimed, some since July 1987.

Palestinians fighting for half of Jerusalem once had it all

By Jack Redden
Reuter

RAMALLAH — As Israel methodically absorbs Arab East Jerusalem, Hala Sakakini is a living reminder of how much Palestinians have lost in their decades of struggle with the Jewish state.

"How do you think I feel?" she asked sitting in the house in the occupied West Bank where she has lived most of the years since losing the family home in West Jerusalem to Jews in 1948.

"Is it right that we should not be considered Palestinians, not be considered Jerusalemites?" asked the 67-year-old former teacher. "Is it just?"

The Sakakinis were among more than half a million Arab who fled or were forced from their part of Palestine as the war that followed the creation of Israel in 1948 raged through the land.

When the fighting stopped, the "green line" dividing Arab and Jewish forces ran through the heart of Jerusalem, leaving newer districts under Israeli control and the old city with Jordanian forces.

The Sakakinis found their home and belongings were stranded inside Israel. Hala and her sister Duma were the only members of the family still alive when they next saw the stone house following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Today their former street in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of old Katamon is called Yordei Hasira, named after a mission of the Israeli military organisation that helped turn the Arab area into

one for Jewish immigrants. Mr. Sakakini's house, a two-floor structure she occupied for 11 years, is now a kindergarten, the nearby Iraqi consulate an apartment block.

Mr. Sakakini can still describe the middle class area house by house — she has published memoirs from the period that include a map drawn from memory. She has not been back since the trip in 1967.

The affluence of old Katamon contrasts with the decay of Arab East Jerusalem, where rubbish accumulates and scarce water is not lavished on plants. In the 24 years since Israel added the east of the city to its rule, little has happened to erase the differences.

Only in Jewish areas, such as the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and new settlements, has the Israeli standard of living appeared in East Jerusalem.

But those Jewish areas are steadily expanding, most recently with the take-over this month of houses in the Arab village of Silwan adjoining the old city. It is part of a concerted effort to both encircle the Palestinian heart of East Jerusalem and then break it up with Jewish enclaves.

Palestinians now are fighting an uphill battle to keep a hold in East Jerusalem. Israel will not allow any of the 140,000 Arabs from that half of the city to join peace talks, presumably in case this throws doubts on Israeli ownership.

Although there are deep divisions in Israel over holding the West Bank and Gaza Strip, captured along with East Jerusalem, there is a broad consensus among

Israelis that they should permanently hold the entire holy city.

The United Nations wanted Jerusalem to be an international city in keeping with its sacred status for Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. Nevertheless, it was the scene of some of the most savage fighting in 1948.

"During the war of independence, the Katamon neighbourhood posed a serious threat to the Jewish neighbourhoods in the centre of Jerusalem," reads a plaque in English and Hebrew that now stands on the edge of the zone.

"The neighbourhood was conquered... between the 29th of April, 1948, and the 2nd of May, 1948."

The Sakakinis, after nights huddled away from windows as bullets ricocheted through the hillside neighbourhood, fled to Egypt.

That sojourn, expected to be brief, lasted five years before Hala and Duma Sakakini returned to settle in Ramallah, a mainly Christian town just north of Jerusalem. But in 1967 they again found themselves in a war, with Israeli troops overrunning the West Bank.

Now retired and watching another attempt to end the decades of Arab-Israeli fighting, Ms. Sakakini looks back with time-softened memories to an era when Palestinians were not the pitied or despised losers of the Middle East.

"Nobody in the world knows what our life was like," she said. On a nearby bookshelf are the memoirs she wrote in English.

King, Arafat study coordination

(Continued from page 1)

before the Palestinian problem is properly addressed and resolved."

Mr. Abed Rabbo, another PLO executive, told Reuters that Syria would host a meeting of the foreign ministers of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt and the head of the PLO's political department ahead of the Madrid conference to decide whether a summit of their leaders would convene later.

"What is intended from this Arab meeting is to standardise our positions to reach a comprehensive position on all aspects of the Middle East problem and ensure there will be no separate peace solutions," Mr. Abed Rabbo was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Mr. Arafat's visit to Jordan coincided with the arrival here of two Palestinian activists from the occupied territories.

Zuhair Kamal and Ghassan Ali Khatib said they were here for talks on the make-up of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace talks.

Ms. Kamal was quoted as saying that a six-member committee of Palestinians will be made up to advise the delegation. She denied that she would be one of the delegation members but said she would serve in the advisory committee.

Mr. Khatib, a professor of economic development at Bir Zeit University and Ms. Kamal, are expected to meet Jordanian officials to discuss the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace conference.

Mr. Khatib said that the final list of the Palestinian delegation will be publicly revealed on Monday.

"A decision was made not to release the names of the Palesti-

nian delegation until Monday," Khatib said in a telephone interview.

Several lists of Palestinian names have been leaked to the press, but none have been confirmed by the Palestinian leadership.

Mr. Khatib said that the general Palestinian mood in the occupied territories was positive about the peace conference, but stressed that the people were cautious.

"The people generally accept the form of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and their participation in the conference," said the professor.

"But their hope is very cautious because they are accustomed to failed attempts to solve the Palestinian problem in the last 24 years," he said.

The professor, known as a supporter of the Palestinian Communist Party, said the Palestinians felt that the efforts appeared more serious.

"With the beginning of negotiations, there will be more optimism among the people in the occupied territories," he predicted.

According to Mr. Abed Rabbo, Mr. Arafat and President Assad agreed that multilateral talks with Israel on water rights, regional disarmament and environmental issues are futile until the Jewish state withdraws from Arab territories.

"Regarding the multilateral phase of the talks, the Syrians and the Palestinians think there is no need to convene them before the peace conference ends its job and secures Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian Arab rights," Mr. Abed Rabbo told Reuters.

"There is also agreement that the issue of Jerusalem and a halt to Israeli settlements on occupied

Arab territories should be on the conference agenda," he said.

The decision-making Palestine Central Council (PCC), which met in Tunis last week, accepted Palestinian participation in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation at the peace conference after dropping a key demand for a freeze in Israeli settlement activity prior to the convening of the conference.

The extent to which Mr. Arafat managed to heal his eight-year rift with President Assad during his visit to Damascus was not immediately known. But the PLO chairman paid tribute to the Syrian president during the meeting late Saturday, according to PLO officials.

According to a Syrian presidential spokesman, Mr. Assad and Mr. Arafat "stressed the necessity of achieving coordination among the Arab parties taking part in the historic peace conference in Madrid on Oct. 30."

PLO Executive Committee member Shafiq Al Hour said the atmosphere at the meeting was "cordial and warm."

Mr. Arafat praised Mr. Assad's stand on Middle East peace and Mr. Hour said the talks were held in line with the wishes of "the Palestinian people inside and outside occupied Palestine."

Meanwhile, the Paris representative of the PLO was quoted as saying that the PLO would be at the peace conference negotiating table "whether anyone wants it or not."

"The PLO is not a political organisation. The PLO is the national identity of the Palestinian people," said Ibrahim Souss in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo. "All Palestinian people are PLO."

"Everyone knows that each Palestinian who will be at the negotiating table will be PLO," he added.

could grow this week once the names of the Palestinian delegates are made public. Mr. Shamir refuses to sit with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Most of the two million Palestinians of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the East Jerusalem, however, proclaim the PLO as their sole representative. The issue of who should represent them was one of the biggest obstacles to arranging the conference.

Palestinian sources said the Palestinian delegation would be headed by Haider Abdul Shafi, 72, head of the Red Crescent Society in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Palestinians submitted a list of proposed delegates to the United States Saturday but said there was still intense debate over who should represent them.

In the occupied Gaza Strip, PLO supporters scrawled graffiti on walls urging Palestinians to ignore a call for a general strike by the rival Islamic resistance movement, Hamas, to mark the start of the peace conference.

King, Pankin review Soviet role

(Continued from page 1)

occupied Jerusalem Friday, arrived here from Damascus after talks with Syrian leaders.

In the Syrian capital, Mr. Pankin pledged that Moscow would work towards ensuring Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

The Soviet foreign minister arrived a few minutes ahead of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat,

who was also visiting Syria. It was not known where Mr. Arafat would meet Mr. Pankin after an expected encounter failed to materialise in the Syrian capital.

Both Mr. Arafat and Mr. Pankin are due in Cairo Monday and reports from the Egyptian capital said the two men could meet. But other reports indicated Paris as the venue for the meeting.

Goethe Institute — thirty years of cultural services

LAST WEEK marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Goethe Institute in Amman. To many intellectuals and habitués of the institute, this has been an occasion to express their gratitude and to review the constant achievements of this institution and its primary role in enhancing the development of Jordanian technology and culture.

The functions of the institute cover Amman, Irbid, Karak and, at times, the remotest areas within Arab East Jerusalem, taking care of graduates of German universities and institutions. Although its work was highly reduced there after the Arab-Israeli war, it has lately intensified meaningfully.

The Goethe Institute introduces modern cultural thought and scientific methods, used in Germany, to professionals here and to the Jordanian community as a whole.

Visiting professionals come from the Federal Republic of Germany, they deliver lectures and held workshops in different

fields. They contact universities, institutions or interested individuals. They cover such subjects as literature, fine arts, architecture, archaeology, museology, environment, geology, water availability or pollution, forestry, health care, traffic planning, economy and law. They hold special lecture cycles on orientalism and Islamic studies.

The work of the Goethe Institute is in no way detrimental to local culture. In fact, most scholars come with the idea "know your culture, keep your culture, modernise your culture."

They encourage documentation and want to limit superficial adaptation of imported ideas. They advise a proper adaptation of foreign methods and functions to develop and modernise our own heritage.

The institute offers its premises to Jordanian professionals to give them an opportunity to impart their knowledge, ideas and opinions to the Jordanian and international community.

The Goethe Institute gives the public a clear insight into German life and culture. It presents

approximately 15 different exhibits, 30 films, four or five concerts, a music workshop, and about 50 lectures every year. It has a reference library with about 3,000 books.

It sometimes awards a scholarship of one or two months in Germany for an intensive German language course. The person awarded the scholarship is then invited to meet professionals in his own field and gets first hand information about the work of his German counterparts.

In order to facilitate cultural and technical exchanges, the institute offers German language courses here in Amman. These are given by highly qualified teachers. The Goethe Institute head office in Munich constantly develops new teaching materials and organises training and professional development for staff members.

The Goethe Institute in Amman produces new publications constantly. Their latest production, the second volume of "The Near East in Antiquity," was made in cooperation with the

German Protestant Institute of Archaeology of the Holy Land in Amman. It relates the German contributions to archaeology of Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

The institute has also undertaken the translation of the book "High over Jordan" into German.

The Museum of Jordanian Heritage at the University of Yarmouk acknowledges its German parentage, the contributions of the Linden Museum in Stuttgart as well as the personal efforts of former German Ambassador to Jordan, Dr. Herwig Bartels.

The Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the German Academic Exchange Service are two more institutions that have worked hand in hand with the Goethe Institute and have succeeded in establishing close relationships with Jordan to the benefit of both countries.

One symposium, the Arab-German dialogue, was held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. It dealt with cultural, economic as

well as psychological relations between the Arab World and Germany.

"It is essential to develop local culture first through self-awareness and self-interpretation, and then move on to the dialogue," says Mr. Heinrich Reinstrom, director of the Goethe Institute in Amman. He spares no effort to cover all fields of study and to attract all interested professionals and intellectuals in the country. He aspires to widen the range of his work-field into the remotest parts of Jordan. "All people deserve good service and a good education," he said, as he seriously considered reaching out to people in Aqaba to use the Orff system of music education. He was trying to figure out how he could make the basic instruments available to them.

Seeing how the staff of the Goethe Institute give so much of themselves for our country, we can only impart our gratitude and wish them 30 more years of success.

Nelly Lama

Is it real or is it almost real? Science imitates life

By Sebastian Moffett
Reuters

TOKYO — Grey Skies, the daily grind, family problems, international crises... ever want to get away from the real world?

An easy escape might soon be at hand.

Put on a headset and data-glove and you could jump into a completely different world — a "virtual reality" where the sun always shines and you can live out your fantasies.

Known as VR, virtual reality has been on the drawing board for years. Now, thanks to increased computer power and a surge of interest, it is finally taking shape.

The system is not quite at the stage portrayed in some movies where computers are used to transport people to other planets. But how about a stroll through a lifelike house?

In what is thought to be the world's first business application of VR technology, an arm of the giant Matsushita electronics group plans to start using VR equipment next month to help customers choose their kitchens.

By donning a headset and "data glove" which monitor head and hand movements, the customer can see the "virtual world" through Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs), or "eyephones," in the headset — one for each eye so stereo vision provides a sense of depth.

Computers process information from the sensors and calculate "where" the customer is in virtual space. They translate this into graphic images which are projected onto the eyephones.

The computers achieve a result fundamental to VR: turning your head to the right in the real world produces the same effect in the virtual world — turning your head to the right.

Another feature adding to the sense of reality is the ability to see a virtual hand before your eyes — raise your real hand and the virtual hand rises, too.

Reach out for a virtual plate and you can "pick it up" by clenching your fist. Clench your fist by a virtual tap and blue virtual water gushes out. With earphones, you can hear the sound of rushing water.

The quality of the LCD images

in the eyephones creates the effect of a cartoon world. Because the images take some time to react, VR works best with slow movements.

These are points which should improve. The quality of LCDs is expected to increase dramatically in the next few years, and reaction speed will rise as semiconductor technology yields greater computer processing speed.

Michitaka Hirose, associate engineering professor at Tokyo University, is looking at applications involving headsets which use half mirrors to superimpose three-dimensional images on the real world.

For instance, the image of a person's brain might float ghost-

like where the brain really is but cannot be seen, so a surgeon could "see" the brain on which he is operating.

Pilots could fly safely in foggy weather because they would be able to see superimposed "virtual" airfields and other planes, where these do in fact exist.

"Tele-existence" is another possibility. Computer processing of information from sensors could enable a robot at a remote point to match exactly the body movements of someone performing a specific task — and defuse a bomb or work in a nuclear power station.

But for the technology to take off, large corporations will have to become interested and devote

some of their massive research and development budgets to the field.

"When VR becomes seen as a concrete business opportunity, lots of companies should join the field, and this will spur the technology along," Mr. Hirose said.

Fujitsu LTD is experimenting with VR and has developed software to reproduce life at the bottom of the ocean.

"Entertainment is the primary application we're thinking of now — like producing movies the viewer can star in themselves," Fujitsu spokesman Jun Narai said.

Analysts say the first commercial applications are likely to be games, followed by architecture.



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Negotiator expects settlement freeze

(Continued from page 1)

which are slated to begin immediately after peace conference. The sources said Syria wanted to hold the talks in Madrid, site of the peace conference, to stress that the talks were an outgrowth of the conference itself.

But Israel, which has always opposed wide international involvement in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and insisted on one-on-one talks with each of its enemies, would like to hold the negotiations in the Middle East.

In his suggested alternating them between a town in the Galilee and a site in Syria. The Syrians refuse to go to Israel or to allow Israelis to visit Syria because they believe this would give the Jewish state an extra measure

of legitimacy without gaining any Israeli concessions in exchange.

The United States is trying to find a compromise between the two positions, possibly by suggesting another European city as venue for the talks.

They are supposed to begin on Nov. 2, the day after the three-day peace conference, which itself is seen as a purely ceremonial event in which each of the parties would deliver opening statements but would not conduct negotiations.

The United States believes Israel's negotiations with the Palestinians, Jordan and Lebanon could achieve some success but is much less hopeful about Israeli-Syrian talks, a senior Bush administration official said Friday.

THE PROFESSIONALS ALWAYS CHOOSE THE RELIABLE

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Jordan Times

Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (October 14-October 18, 1991)

AMMAN — Notwithstanding underlying bearish sentiment towards it, the dollar traded higher early last week. The rise was attributed, on balance, to technical factors, triggered by the apparent postponement of a Fed interest rate cut, coupled with the market's weakness against the yen. The dollar nevertheless, ended the week an average of 0.14% lower against the major European currencies, but 0.25% higher against the yen, compared to the previous week's closing rates.

Despite a Columbus Day holiday in the U.S., some New York traders took the dollar higher Monday, as they covered short positions in thin trading. The U.S. unit went higher still the following day, closing at its highest level of the week at 1.7134 marks, 1.6995 dollars to the pound sterling and at 130.13 yen to the dollar. Tuesday's rise was attributed to the fact that the Fed had not moved to cut interest rates as expected triggering further dollar short covering. Lack of agreement by the G-7 to help the USSR pay off its external debts brought pressure on the market in the crosses, because of the high exposure of German banks to Moscow, which in turn reflected favourably on the dollar. Additionally, the G-7's implicit endorsement of a strong yen further weakened the German currency, causing it to drop to 75.95 yen, and contributed to its decline against the dollar.

As of Wednesday, however, the dollar started a gradual decline in anticipation of a possible Fed interest rate cut Thursday, should U.S. Consumer Price for September, scheduled to be released that day, continue to indicate a low inflation level. The mark, on the other hand, started a gradual rebound against the yen in cross trading, whilst traders covered short mark position to take profits, despite on-going speculation of a possible mark drop to 75.00 yen to the mark in the short run.

The dollar surged in early New York trading Thursday on a larger than expected 0.4% rise in September's Consumer Prices. The rally soon lost steam, however, and reversed into a decline due to comments from White House economic advisor Michael Boskin impressing on the necessity to cut interest rates if growth in money supply, namely M2, continues to be unsatisfactory. Mr. Boskin's comments rekindled expectations of a Fed interest rate cut, even though weekly M2 growth turned out better than expected, rising by \$4.5 billion, compared to expectations of a drop of \$2.1 billion. Other economic reports released during the day had an adverse influence on the dollar, as they reflected a weak U.S. economy. Industrial Output rose in September by a mere 0.1%, while August's trade gap widened further to \$6.76 billion from \$5.95 in July.

The release of a second batch of U.S. economic reports with negative results further reinstated the unfavourable dollar trend Friday. September's Housing Starts fell 2.2%, its first decline in six months, and a survey conducted by Michigan University showed consumer confidence had dropped to its lowest level in five months. Meanwhile, the Japanese currency dropped to 76.96 yen to the mark, after Kichi Miyazawa, widely expected to be the next Japanese prime minister, was reported as saying that the Japanese economy was "... in bad shape," thus signalling a possible Bank of Japan interest rate cut. The yen's weakness against the mark, further intensified the dollar's drop to its lowest levels of the week against European currencies.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	11/10/91	18/10/91	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.7235	1.7265	+0.17%
Deutsche Mark	1.6885	1.6873	-0.07%
Swiss Franc	1.4795	1.4755	-0.27%
French Franc	5.7540	5.7515	-0.04%
Japanese Yen	129.53	129.85	-0.25%

* USD Per STD

Three-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	11/10/91	18/10/91	1-Month (%)	3-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.12	5.50	5.12	5.12	5.37
Sterling Pound*	10.43	10.12	10.43	10.12	10.12
Deutsche Mark	9.12	9.43	9.12	9.12	9.25
Swiss Franc	8.00	8.06	8.06	8.06	8.06
French Franc	9.12	9.37	9.37	9.37	9.21
Japanese Yen	6.81	6.00	6.53	5.62	5.62

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	11/10/91	18/10/91
U.S. Dollar	.685	.687
Sterling Pound	1.1811	1.1870
Deutsche Mark	.4053	.4073
Swiss Franc	.4635	.4658
French Franc	.1190	.1196
Japanese Yen*	.5268	.5294
Dutch Guilder	.3598	.3616
Swedish Krona	.1111	.1117
Italian Lira*	.0542	.0545
Belgian Franc	.01971	.01981

* Per 100

Foreign debt market set to maintain growth

BANGKOK (R) — The market where traders buy and sell countries' foreign debt has grown rapidly over the past year and market players say this should continue in the next 12 months.

At the same time the nature of this market has changed quickly. It has been transformed from a place where only loans were bought and sold to resemble more a bond market with good liquidity and big turnover.

Traders expect turnover to jump to over \$200 billion this year from \$75 billion in 1990.

"The emergence of Brady Bonds has stimulated the market," said Gerrit Jan Tammen, vice-chairman of NMB Postbank, one of the biggest debt traders. "New players like institutional investors in the U.S. have come in."

Brady Bonds are the instruments issued in exchange for debt when countries enter a debt-reduction exercise under the Brady initiative.

This was launched in 1989 when U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady suggested a plan

to cut the commercial bank obligations of the world's debtors.

The plan was characterised by the participation of multilateral financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, in supporting debt reduction.

The operations were designed to create marketable instruments as well as an element of debt forgiveness and a reduction of interest payments.

The risks involved vary widely from country to country.

For example par bonds issued by Venezuela and Mexico under their Brady-style deals trade at around 69% and 59% per cent of face value respectively, while Nigerian loans that will soon be converted trade at 43% per cent.

Traders say the price of Nigerian paper is likely to rise once the bonds are issued but Nigeria will not catch up with the other countries because the risks are seen as much greater.

"If Brazil and Argentina sort out Brady deals in the next year, this will contribute to the growth

of turnover," said Paul Luke, economic adviser to British merchant bank Chartered Westlb.

Another sign of maturity in the market is the fact that many operators are getting heavily involved in derivative products such as futures and options.

But, although the market is becoming more mature, it still attracts speculators looking for big yields at high risk.

The recent move into countries where any Brady-type deal is still far away is evidence of the trend.

Any sign of economic and political stability in problem countries leads to investors snapping up what they can.

Peru, which has not paid any interest to commercial banks since 1985, has risen sharply from around four per cent of face value in March to 14% per cent now.

The bull run in the market has meant that with dollar interest rates low, investors have seen huge yields for low risk in the case of those countries such as Mexico and Venezuela that have instituted IMF programmes and gone a long way to stabilise their economies.

Nigeria gets tough to curb wide mismanagement, fraud

LAGOS (R) — The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is cracking down on marvellous finance houses in an apparent attempt to curb widespread mismanagement and fraud.

The CBN have set tough guidelines for the houses after President Ibrahim Babangida told Nigerian bank executives to mend their ways or risk their jobs and face prosecution.

CBN spokesman Tony Ede said the guidelines, including the need for each company to have a minimum paid-up capital of five million naira (\$500,000), were designed to bring the houses firmly under the CBN's wing.

The CBN lists a finance house

as a company that extends credit facilities to consumers and to industrial, commercial or agricultural enterprises.

It includes leasing, hire purchase, project financing or consultancy, and companies engaging in electronic fund transfers and the issue of credit cards and token stamps.

The number of such organisations operating in Nigeria is not known but bankers say there could be more than 1,000.

"Some of them are operated by one man with a car telephone, while many of them accept cash deposits from the public without government approval and are centres for fraud," one banker

said. "The guidelines are likely to weed out many of the fraudulent businesses," he added.

Under the guidelines, no finance house can accept deposits in any form or deal in foreign currency and all of them must be licensed with the CBN after stating their proposed objectives and financial projections for a five-year period.

A total of 500,000 naira (\$50,000) or 10 per cent of adjusted capital, whichever is higher, must be deposited with the CBN. University degrees and between three and five years postgraduate experience are mandatory for top executives.

Czechoslovakia beefs up reserves to \$2.2 billion

BANGKOK (R) — Czechoslovakia has boosted its foreign-exchange reserves to \$2.2 billion at the end of September from \$1.2 billion at the start of the year, Finance Minister Václav Klaus has said.

Mr. Klaus said the reforming government wanted to show its currency, the crown, could hold at current levels.

Foreign funding to back economic reforms introduced Jan. 1 this year was not needed to finance imports as the economy started to adjust but was used to rebuild reserves, he told Reuters in an interview.

"To increase our reserves during the first post-liberalisation period is a success," he said. Czechoslovakia liberalised prices and foreign trade on Jan. 1, introducing internal convertibility allowing companies to buy foreign exchange for imports without state intervention.

Mr. Klaus said Czechoslovakia would need further foreign funding in 1992.

"We will need some addition for next year. I would say that the tough talks will start in November, when the IMF mission comes to Prague," he said.

The Group of 24 rich industrialised nations promised \$1 billion for Czechoslovakia in 1991 although not all of this has been paid out, in addition to IMF funding of \$1.3 billion.

A preliminary estimate of needs for 1992 prepared by the

EC and the IMF said Czechoslovakia would have a financing gap of around \$600 million.

Mr. Klaus said he wanted western Europe and other countries to open up their markets to its products as it adapted to a market economy.

But there were problems, he added. Industrial output fell 18 per cent in the first nine months of 1991 and unemployment was 5.6 per cent.

"We know that we have not yet reached the 'transformation bottom' and that output will continue to decline, pushing the unemployment rate higher next year," he said.

Much of this drop was due to the loss of Czechoslovakia's traditional export markets in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe due to the disintegration of the former Comecon trade bloc, and the unification of Germany.

"To alleviate this, we could be helped by a greater openness towards our goods in western Europe and other countries," he said.

"Our exporters have an especially difficult time refocusing their exports from uncompetitive and insolvent markets to competitive Western ones, and if they have to overcome artificial trade barriers, it is a task above their heads," he said.

Mr. Klaus said he hoped Czechoslovakia would be able to conclude its association agreement with the European Community (EC) soon.

Investors snap up new issues

Saudi stock market booms

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Saudi Arabia's stock market is booming as cash-rich investors scramble for new share issues, reflecting renewed confidence in the kingdom's economy after the Gulf war.

Saudi Arabia's official share index rose 1.8 per cent to a record 161.08 points in the week ended last Wednesday, the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency (SAMA) said Sunday.

The Saudi Press Agency quoted SAMA as saying trading volume on the kingdom's Telephone and Computer Exchange jumped to 735,998 shares worth 204 million riyals (\$54 million) from 487,242 shares worth 106 million riyals (\$28 million) the previous week.

Economists in Riyadh say share prices for about 60 listed companies have risen by an average of 60 per cent since the start of the year, signalling the return of confidence to the kingdom's post-war economy.

Cash-rich investors are scrambling for the new share issues made over the last two months, reflecting the limited amount of stock available to satisfy demand.

Economists in Riyadh say two share flotations this year — the first in Saudi Arabia since 1989 — have been heavily oversubscribed and they expect a similar response to several more scheduled for the next few months.

"The market has been quite

active in the past few months — there is a lot of appetite for new share issues and demand far exceeds supply," Enzar Ahmed, vice-president of the Independent Consulting Centre for Finance and Investment in Riyadh said.

"Major investors are starting to bring their money back because the returns are better here than in international markets," he said in a telephone interview.

During the Gulf crisis, investors transferred large sums out of the region for fear the conflict might spread.

A 180 million riyal (\$48 million) share issue in May by the Saudi Land Transport Company — a relatively unknown firm — was oversubscribed by more than 300 per cent, Mr. Ahmed said.

A 360 million riyal (\$96 million) flotation by Saudi Savola, one of the kingdom's biggest manufacturing companies, has already broken all previous records for share applications with another two weeks to go before closing, he said.

National Industrialisation Company (NIC) is next in line with a 300 million riyal (\$80 million) issue scheduled to begin Nov. 16.

It will be followed by the biggest share flotation in Saudi history — a four billion riyal (\$1.06 billion) issue by Riyadh Bank, the kingdom's second-biggest commercial bank in terms of assets.

A new firm, Saudi Industrial

Development Co., which will invest in new ceramic and pharmaceutical industries, plans a 250 million riyal (\$67 million) share issue early next year.

The kingdom's Al Jazira Bank is expected to follow suit with a flotation to substantially increase its capital.

There is no formal exchange in Saudi Arabia but brokers say a computerised trading system introduced last year has smoothed transactions by providing accurate pricing and information.

Despite the Gulf crisis, companies in the main banking, services and industrial sectors generally performed well in 1990 and are reporting even higher profits in 1991.

Share prices for some major firms, including Savola, Al Rajhi Banking Corporation, and United Saudi Commercial Bank, have more than doubled in the past 12 months.

But Mr. Ahmed said the dramatic price increases also reflected the fact that investors were chasing a limited amount of shares.

"Price increases are out of proportion to company performance. There must be some kind of rationalisation in the future — investors must be aware of this," he said.

The government still holds about half the shares in the Saudi market and many long-term investors prefer to keep their stocks rather than trade them.

Fighting deals deadly blow to Yugoslavia's crippled economy

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav fighting, which has claimed hundreds of human lives, has dealt a deadly blow to the country's already crippled economy.

Industrial production has plunged while inflation has rocketed and the number of jobless has soared.

Industrial production in the first eight months of the year was down 17.3 per cent and was expected to deteriorate further if fighting continued.

"Experts expect that, unless the war stops, industrial production this year will be one-third lower than last year," Tanjug news agency has said.

Since the northwestern republics of Slovenia and Croatia, the most westernised in Yugoslavia, declared independence in June, the beleaguered economy has slid deeper into crisis.

"The decline of the Yugoslav economy is like water in a toilet," one Western economist said. "It starts going round slowly and goes faster as it goes further down the hole."

Dagmar Suster, the president of the Yugoslav Chamber of Economy, said last month that shortages and rationing of some basic goods and petrol were imminent.

"I think it is only a matter of days before it (rationing) is introduced for petroleum," one Western economist expert said.

The total losses of the Yugoslav economy in the first half of the year amounted to \$4.7 billion (dinars \$3.8 billion), Tanjug said.

About 300,000 workers have lost their jobs in that period, pushing the unemployment rate past 20 per cent, and 4,000 more firms, employing one million workers, were on the verge of bankruptcy, the Federal Auditing

Service said. With the annual inflation rate hitting almost 130 per cent in September and the average monthly wage at about \$330, many Yugoslavs live on the poverty line.

"The only high spot of the Yugoslav economy this year has been agricultural production," Tanjug said.

Wheat harvests topped a record of 6.4 million tonnes and a record maize production of 13 million tonnes was expected.

But farmers expressed fears that they might not be able to harvest the crop because of fighting in many agricultural areas and a lack of fuel.

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Sporadic fighting continues in Croatia

Mercy convoy evacuates Vukovar wounded after nightmare trip

NOVI MIKANOVCI, Yugoslavia (R) — A French mercy convoy, zig-zagging through enemy lines and mortar fire for half a day, ferried more than 100 badly wounded people to safety in rebel Croatia Sunday.

Fighting continued in Croatia despite a new ceasefire call by the republic and the Serb-led Yugoslav army.

Croatian Radio said the intensity of the fighting had eased Sunday, with only sporadic gunfire in villages in northeast Croatia. Tanjug News Agency said Croatian forces shelled army positions in Nova Gradiska and Novska in central Croatia.

More than 1,000 Croats and an unknown number of Serbs have been killed since Yugoslavia's second-largest republic broke away on June 25, declaring independence from the Yugoslav state set up in 1918.

The declaration sparked an uprising by Croatia's 600,000-strong Serb minority, backed by the army and Serbia, the largest republic in the country of 23.5 million people.

Special U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance said over the weekend that a U.N.-imposed arms embargo had failed. He predicted 400,000 or more refugees by the end of the year.

The mercy convoy evacuated 109 Croats to a makeshift field hospital in the village of Novi Mikanovci after a hazardous journey in which two nurses were

badly wounded.

"The convoy reached Novi Mikanovci at one a.m. It's really good news," said Anne-Marie Finby, a spokeswoman for the Paris-based aid group Medecines Sans Frontieres.

The convoy zig-zagged for 13 hours along muddy back roads to Novi Mikanovci. The tiny village is only about 40 kilometres from Vukovar, but it took an indirect route of about 80 kilometres along winding, pot-holed roads.

The nurses, Ghislaine Jacquier of Switzerland and Fabienne Schmidt of Luxembourg, had their legs broken and one suffered concussion when their truck ran over a landmine, she said.

The convoy was the first to evacuate wounded from Vukovar since the army began a siege of the town almost two months ago.

Carrying the injured, some without arms or legs, the 12-vehicle convoy under army escort was bogged down for hours in a muddy field. At one point it went through Serbian territory.

"We had to drive along paths through cornfields. We ended up having to slide the vehicles down a muddy slope. Then the army used tanks to pull us away," one driver said.

The convoy detour took it briefly across the border into Serbia and then back into Croatia.

Croatian Guards gave the injured drinks and made victory signs as they passed through vil-

lages.

The final stretch took the convoy back on bumpy, muddy tracks. It crept along at five kph (three mph), arriving in Mikanovci early Sunday.

Most of the wounded were Croatian Police or National Guards who had been defending Vukovar.

"The town has been destroyed. It isn't there any more," said Dario Topuljnjak, an injured policeman huddling under a blanket in the back of a truck.

"There is no food, no water, no electricity. The people are tired, but they will never give up. They will fight to the last," he said.

There were 300 more seriously wounded people in Vukovar, he said. Some 15,000 Croats are still in the once ethnically mixed town of 50,000.

The defiant stand of Vukovar, which lies across the Danube River from Serbia, has turned it into a symbol of Croatian resistance to Serbian attempts to take over large chunks of their territory.

Yugoslav Defence Minister General Veljko Kadijevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman ordered the 10th ceasefire in Croatia in four months at noon (1100 GMT) Saturday as part of a deal worked out with the European Community Friday.

Serbia and its three allies on the eight-man collective state presidency said Mr. Tudjman had not complied with the ceasefire

fully because he made it conditional on the army lifting blockades of several towns and ports.

Local radio reports Sunday suggested fighting had eased slightly during a night of driving rain. Tanjug said Croatian forces shelled army and Serb positions in Nova Gradiska and Novska Sunday, but gave no details.

There were no new reports of deaths Sunday. Nine people were reported killed Saturday in battles that engulfed most of the main flashpoints — around the port of Dubrovnik in the south, Nova Gradiska in the centre and Vukovar.

In the most serious incidents, Yugoslav army units staged amphibious assaults Saturday on the coastal towns of Kupari and Srebreno, south of Dubrovnik, and air force jets strafed the central town of Pakrac, Croatian Radio said.

The federal army and Croatian officials were due to resume peace talks Sunday.

In negotiations Saturday, Croatia said it was willing to lift a barricade of federal army bases if the army set out a plan to withdraw from the republic, Croatian Radio said.

The regular peace talks in Zagreb provided the agreement under which the Vukovar wounded were evacuated and more than 130 army vehicles were allowed to leave the Borongaj Barracks in Zagreb after being blockaded for more than a month.

Indian quake toll may reach 200

NEW DELHI (AP) — A powerful earthquake rocked the Himalayan foothills along the Indian-Tibetan border Sunday, killing at least 100 people, police said. Some officials said they feared the death toll would exceed 200.

Most of the victims died in landslides or in collapsed buildings. At least 1,000 people were injured.

India's Seismology Department said the quake, measuring 6.1 on the Richter Scale, shook northern Uttar Pradesh state at 2:53 a.m. (2123 GMT). In Washington, a preliminary reading by the U.S. Geological Survey put the magnitude at 7.1.

Rescue operations were hampered by landslides that blocked roads in the mountainous region, where access is arduous in the best of times.

The worst affected area was Uttarakashi, an Indian border district adjoining Chinese-ruled Tibet, a spokesman for the regional police force said.

"The damage is very very severe. Hundreds of people are stranded because of road blocks," said a senior civil official in Dehra Dun, 45 kilometres southwest of Uttarakashi town.

The official, contacted by telephone spoke on condition of anonymity.

The police spokesman, also contacted in Dehra Dun, said at least 81 people were killed in two towns in the Uttarakashi district. About 1,000 people were injured in the district, said the spokesman, who cannot be identified under police regulations.

Another 20 people died in the Chamoli district, just east of Uttarakashi, a police official said in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state capital. The victims included 15 pilgrims at a Hindu temple in Kedarnath.

V.P. Sinha, the Lucknow official, said the Chamoli report came by radio from the stricken region's deputy inspector general of police, Sumit Shankar Banerjee.

Inspector Banerjee said at least

200 people were feared dead in Uttarakashi district, where several Hindu pilgrim towns are located.

The Chamoli and Uttarakashi districts stretch for about 200 kilometres along the Tibetan border.

Communications are tenuous in the rugged, sparsely populated region of valleys and mountains soaring more than 6,000 metres above sea level.

In Uttarakashi, the home of the district police chief collapsed, crushing his 14-year-old son to death, Sinha said.

He also said there were fears of flooding farther south, because landslides had dammed the Bhagirathi River, which flows down from the Himalayas.

The river, which becomes the Ganges at the pilgrim town of Hardwar, traverses the fertile plains of northern India and empties into the Bay of Bengal.

The last major earthquake in the region was on Aug. 21, 1988, along the Indian-Nepalese border.

Joan Rivers to have a 'touch up'

NEW YORK (AP) — Talk show host Joan Rivers is going to put her best face forward. Rivers, who has undergone cosmetic surgery in the past, plans to go for a "touch up" Monday, her publicist said. She will unveil the results on her Wednesday show, which also will include footage of the pre-surgery consultation and the post-surgery recovery.



Man wins \$127 m in eye lawsuit

CHICAGO (R) — An Illinois man who blamed the loss of his left eye on the drug Depo-Medrol won a \$127.6 million jury award from Manufacturer Upjohn Co. In the decision Friday the jury decided that Meyer Proctor should receive more than \$3.1 million in compensatory damages and \$124.6 million in punitive damages. "Upjohn will appeal," Philip Sheldon, public relations director for the Kalamazoo, Michigan-based company, said in a telephone interview. "We are totally surprised by the decision and appalled by the verdict." Punitive damages were sought on grounds that Upjohn failed to warn the medical profession about proper use of the drug. The jury acquitted the doctor in proctor's case of liability.

Cambodian Communist chief pledges 'clean democratic nation'

BANGKOK (AP) — The head of Cambodia's transformed Communist Party has pledged to build a "clean democratic nation" with a free-market economy and full human rights, reports seen Sunday said.

Chea Sim also endorsed Prince Norodom Sihanouk for the future presidency of Cambodia, which this week hopes to end two decades of war and bloody revolution.

Mr. Chea Sim spoke Saturday at a post-congress session of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which earlier had endorsed sweeping changes to its Communist platform. The party also changed its name from the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party.

The congress, in Phnom Penh last Thursday and Friday, marked the demise of yet another Marxist-Leninist party. Cambodia also became the first country in Indochina, which also includes Laos and Vietnam, to adopt a multi-party system.

"The CPP has adopted a democratic regime so as to heighten the spirit of patriotism and promote relations with all countries. The country's political system is a liberal democracy," Mr. Chea Sim said.

"The CPP will implement a free-market economy, allowing trade in all economic forms."

The congress came just days before leaders of Cambodia's four warring factions were to sign a peace accord in Paris. This is to lead towards U.N.-supervised elections in which the CPP will one of presumably several contesting parties.

The CPP had held sole power since 1979, when a Vietnamese invasion force ousted the Khmer Rouge and installed a new government in Phnom Penh. This government, with Hanoi's help, fought three guerrilla groups, including the Khmer Rouge and two non-Communist factions.

Former guerrilla leader and one-time head of state Prince Sihanouk is to return to Phnom Penh next month to begin the process of reconciliation and pave the way to elections.

Mr. Chea Sim said Prince Sihanouk's presidency would be "the most appropriate formula to prevent Cambodia from confronting new political crises." He said the party would protect the country from a recurrence of the murderous Khmer Rouge era of the mid-1970s.

The congress elevated Mr. Chea Sim to head the party, replacing the lackluster Heng Samrin. Premier Hun Sen, a pragmatic leader who negotiates the peace pact for the Phnom Penh government, was elected party vice president.

"The party intends to build a clean, democratic nation with prosperity and the ability to preserve the fine national tradition and customs," Mr. Chea Sim said in a speech broadcast over Phnom Penh radio and monitored in Bangkok by a Western embassy.

Reiterating the new party platform, he said citizens had the right to express their opinions, hold meetings "play politics," defend themselves in court and adhere to any religion.

Judge won't release Tampa sex video

TAMPA, Florida (R) — A notorious videotape of a couple having sex in their bathroom won't be on national television, at least not until the couple has their day in court, a judge ruled Monday.

The neighbour who shot the video through the window, outraged that the couple was making love in view of children playing nearby, had asked the court to return his tape so he could sell it to one of several interested television chat or gossip shows. Hillsborough County Judge Cynthia Holloway ruled that Lee Adler's tape will remain in custody of the country sheriff, at least until after the December trial of Alfred Stevens and Janet Paddock. Holloway said she was ordering the tape withheld "in the interest of a fair trial" after a prosecutor said that if the tape was released and broadcast it would be tough to find an impartial jury. The couple, who recently announced their intention to marry during a chat show appearance, faces misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct, less serious than the felony charge they originally faced for lewd and lascivious behaviour in front of children.

Accused bares all for S. African justice

COPE TOWN (R) — A South African judge hastily cleared his court Tuesday when a stark naked man appeared in the dock accused of possessing marijuana.

The man, identified as Doctor September, stripped off after being led from the police cells at Cape Town magistrates' court, explaining to Judge H.L. Muller that he did not believe in wearing clothes. Muller ordered the court cleared and ordered Mr. September, 38, to be held for psychiatric examination.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Dhaka minister denies starvation

DHAKA (R) — A Bangladesh minister has denied reports of people starving in flood-hit areas, saying these were intended to malign the new democratic government. "Reports appearing in newspapers that famine situation is prevailing in northern districts and people are dying of starvation are baseless and a travesty of truth," Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gohar Hafez said Saturday.

After visiting eight districts recovering from recent floods, he told a news conference more than 1,700 people had been confirmed killed by diarrhoeal diseases despite efforts by 2,400 medical teams to contain the epidemic. Unofficial sources said the death toll from the epidemic, spread by polluted water and rotten food, had passed 3,000. Nearly 120,000 people in 24 flood-stricken districts have been affected by the epidemic, official figures said.

'KGB budget is 6.4b roubles'

MOSCOW (R) — The KGB security service, feared across the Soviet Union for seven decades but now facing abolition, has an annual budget of 6.4 billion roubles, the weekly Argumenty I Fakty said in its latest issue. Of the figure, worth \$10.9 billion at the inflated official exchange rate, 50 million roubles (\$85 million) was in foreign currency, it said. The liberal weekly was giving details of talks between new KGB chief Vadim Bakatin and the Soviet Union's ruling state council last week at which a formal decision was taken to do away with the once-powerful agency.

Swiss vote for new parliament

ZURICH (R) — Swiss electors voted Sunday for a new parliament that will almost certainly have to tackle the divisive issue of European Community (EC) membership. More than half the 4.5 million eligible voters are expected to stay at home following a dull campaign in which the ruling parties refused to commit themselves on major issues. Opinion polls have held out little prospect of a change in the four-party umbrella coalition, dubbed the magic formula, that has ruled the Alpine state since 1959. Although there is sharp disagreement among the main political factions and the wider populace on the issue of closer European integration, Switzerland's system of consensus government effectively forces broad cooperation on the parties. In the last election in 1987, the coalition parties gathered 72 per cent of votes. They took 159 of the 200 seats in the lower house and 42 of 46 seats in the upper house. The centre-left Social Democrats, with 43 seats, are positive on European integration in some form and the right-wing People's Party, with 25 are unequivocally against. But the two bedrock centre-right parties, the Radical Democrats who have 51 of the 200 lower house seats and the Christian Democrats with 42, are both split down the middle.

S. Korean drives into crowd, kills 2

SEOUL (R) — A South Korean man unhappy at his failure to find a job slammed his car into a crowded Seoul plaza, killing two young boys and injuring 21 people, some critically, police said Sunday. Kim Yong-Jae, 20, an unemployed factory worker, took a 13-year-old girl hostage and tried to stab her but his knife glided off her belt buckle, police said. Driving a stolen car, Kim ploughed into the crowded Yoido Plaza in southern Seoul Saturday night where many teenagers were cycling and roller-skating. The two dead boys were aged seven and 12, police said. Twenty-one people were injured and several were in critical condition. After ramming the crowd, Kim abandoned the car and tried to flee with the girl as hostage. He was overpowered and handed over to police. Kim wanted to take revenge on society and kill himself after failing to find a job because of poor eyesight, a police officer said.

S. Korean seaman defects to North

TOKYO (R) — A South Korean seaman defected to Communist North Korea because life in the South was too hard for a man without money or power, Pyongyang's official news agency said. Choe Hui Chang, 32, was born in South Korea's Pusan City but wanted to return to the North Korean birthplace of his father, the (North) Korean Central News Agency said in a report dated Saturday and monitored in Tokyo. In South Korea "where it is hard for a moneyless and powerless man to live... the thought of going over to the North, where my father's birthplace is, became more determined," Mr. Choe was quoted as saying. Mr. Choe, who worked as a crewman on a Japanese-owned ship, said he watched for a chance to defect, trying several times before he at last succeeded. The report did not say where and how he defected.

Quake shakes islands of Bali, Lombok

JAKARTA (R) — A strong earthquake rocked the Indonesian islands of Bali and Lombok Saturday, but there were no immediate reports of damage, the Antara News Agency said Sunday. The 10-second tremor, whose epicentre was near the island of Sumbawa just east of Bali and Lombok, measured 5.3 on the open-ended Richter Scale — strong enough to cause serious damage. The quake shook the west Lombok city of Mataram Saturday after noon and was felt in the resort island of Bali.

Yeltsin steers cautious path through ethnic issues

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin is trying to steer a cautious path through a minefield of ethnic disturbances exploding across his far-flung domains.

Opposition to Russian rule has flared in a string of southern autonomous republics, ethnic or tribal areas which theoretically have internal self-government but where activists are now demanding more real power.

Mr. Yeltsin called Saturday for separatists in the autonomous republic of Chechen-Ingush to lay down their weapons, but was met with scorn from Chechen leaders who described his appeal as the "last belch of Russian imperialism."

A threat to Mr. Yeltsin's Russian Federation also came from armed pro-independent groups in the autonomous Republic of Tatarstan which ignored attempts by their president, Mintimer Shaymiev, to outlaw the creation of military associations.

But Mr. Yeltsin, hoping for financial support for his battered republic from wealthy Germany, reaffirmed his backing for the creation of a Russian autonomous state for about two million ethnic Germans inside the Soviet Union.

Campaigns by the autonomous republics to have a bigger say in their own affairs were undermined by the abortive Kremlin coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in August.

Before the coup, they were to have signed a union treaty binding together 15 Soviet republics and their dependents. The treaty was scrapped after the coup, when Mr. Yeltsin moved into the ascendant by spearheading resistance to it.

Eight of the 12 remaining Soviet republics signed a limited economic treaty Friday but leaders of autonomous republics were not invited to take part in the ceremony.

"All yesterday's autonomous republics have returned to their starting point," Tatarstan's Shaymiev told his parliament.

TASS news agency said Mr. Shaymiev's decree outlawing the formation of armed groups in his republic had little effect.

It quoted Vener Salimov, deputy chairman of Tatarstan's KGB security police, as saying that about 3,000 people had already signed up for a people's guard demanding independence.

The Chechen-Ingush autonomous republic, whose 1.3 million people are mostly Sunni Muslims, is the most militant new hotpot of ethnic unrest.

Armed opposition groups have surrounded the KGB and other buildings in the region's capital, Grozny, and are locked in a struggle with its Russian-backed government.

Mr. Yeltsin said the separatist leaders must surrender their weapons and evacuate the captured government buildings. He said he would take all legal measures to enforce his order after three days of grace.

But Khassan Akhmadov, deputy president of the Chechen People's Executive Committee, called Mr. Yeltsin's threat "the last belch of the Russian Empire" and an attempt to stamp on the throat of democratic forces in the Chechen Republic.

Mr. Yeltsin was gentler with a congress in Moscow of representatives of two million Germans, mostly descended from artisans brought to Russia in the 18th century by the Empress Catherine the Great.

Soviet Germans lost their Volga autonomous republic under Soviet leader Josef Stalin and were banished to Central Asia.

North wrote.

"I have no doubt he was told about the use of residuals for the contras and that he approved it. Enthusiastically," he added.

Col. North, 48, was a Marine lieutenant colonel when he worked in the Reagan White House as a National Security Council aide. In November 1986, Mr. Reagan and his attorney general, Ed Meese, announced the Discovery of the diversion, the resignation of Col. North's boss, National Security Adviser John Poindexter. Col. North was fired from his White House job and has since retired from the Marine Corps.

Mr. Reagan has always insisted that he knew nothing of the arms sale diversions to arm the contras.

The book makes no disclosures about President Bush or his nominee to head the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Robert Gates. It is, therefore, unlikely to affect the upcoming Senate vote on Mr. Gates's nomination.

Nor does Col. North provide a smoking gun to prove his allegations against Mr. Reagan, although he offers quotes from a tape that might reveal whether Mr. Reagan knew of the operation if only Col. North and pro-

North is 'convinced' Reagan knew about Iran-contra affair

NEW YORK (R) — Oliver North says in a new book he is convinced Ronald Reagan "knew everything" about the Iran-contra affair when he was president, and that he was pressed by an aide to then-Vice President George Bush, a U.S. senator and a millionaire to say Mr. Reagan knew nothing of the scheme.

Col. North, the former White House aide at the heart of the scandal that shook the Reagan administration, wrote that at the time the scandal broke, in November 1986, he thought Mr. Reagan knew about the illegal arms sales to Iran and the diversion of the proceeds to Nicaraguan contra rebels fighting the leftist Sandinista government.

"And now, five years later, I am even more convinced: President Reagan knew everything," Col. North says in excerpts from the book, Under Fire. The excerpts, to be published in next week's Time magazine, were released Saturday.

"Ronald Reagan knew and approved a great deal of what went on with both the Iranian initiative and the private supply efforts on behalf of the contras and he received regular, detailed briefings on both topics," Col.

North wrote.

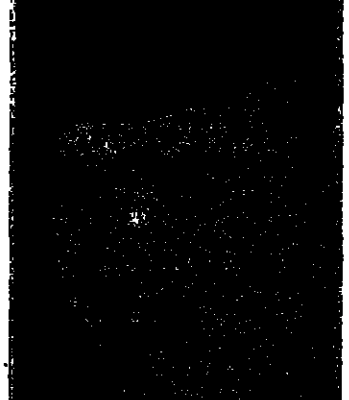
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Oliver North

sectors knew who was speaking on it.

The tape of a routine conversation between two employees at New York's Citibank was found to also include talk on Iran-contra between two other men, including one who Col. North says must have testified before the U.S. Congress.

In it, one of the participants says, "there's a smoking gun in the closet. Reagan knows." Col. North said he could not get the voices identified although he suspects that one was the late Ed Hickey, head of Mr. Reagan's

military office.

Col. North wrote that he was pressured to clear the president's name by three people, including Texas millionaire H. Ross Perot and former U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada.

The White House, CIA and the Iran-contra special prosecutor's office all declined comment Saturday. Spokesman for Mr. Reagan, Mr. Perot and Sen. Laxalt were not immediately available for comment.

Col. North said Mr. Perot told his lawyer:

"Why doesn't Ollie just end this thing and explain to the FBI that the President (Reagan) didn't know? If he goes to jail, I'll take care of his family. And I'll be happy to give him a job when he gets out."

He said that a military aide to then-Vice President Bush — whom he does not name — visited him to ask that he absolve the president and that Sen. Laxalt, one of Mr. Reagan's closest friends, sent a memo arguing that it would not affect his court case if he absolved Mr. Reagan.

Col. North thinks the approaches were part of a pattern to clear Mr. Reagan's name and says that when the scandal broke

he received a call from the president in which Mr. Reagan said, "Ollie, believe me, I didn't know what was going on."

Adm. Poindexter, in dramatic testimony to Congress, backed up Mr. Reagan's statements saying, "the buck stopped with me."

Col. North said that then-CIA Director William Casey was much more involved in contra supply efforts than previously believed.

Col. North said Mr. Casey, who died in 1987, helped him set up an offshore bank account for foreign contributors to the contras and put him in touch with retired Air Force General Richard Secord to create "project democracy," which supplied the contras with weapons.

A federal court recently overturned Col. North's conviction for obstructing Congress on the grounds that testimony at his trial was tainted by his appearance before congressional hearings on the Iran-arms scandal.

Col. North has been fined \$150,000. But he escaped a prison term on the conviction for helping to create a false chronology of Iran-contra events, shredding official documents and accepting an illegal gratuity.

Scientists report major prehistoric painting find

MARSEILLE, France (R) — French divers have discovered prehistoric paintings that may be among the best preserved in Europe in a grotto accessible only by an underwater passage, scientists said Friday. The cavern, near the southern port of Marseille, was filled with well-preserved paintings of deer, horses, seals and bison as well as imprints of human hands. The scientists said it was as important a find as the caves of Lascaux in southwestern France, until now considered the best preserved prehistoric frescoes in Europe. "This is an exceptional discovery," said archaeologist Alain Delcourt. "The site is in excellent condition. It is as though 'Paleolithic man had just left it.' The grotto, thought to date from between 12,000 and 20,000 B.C., was discovered several months ago but scientists kept their find secret while they investigated it fully. Last month three divers died mysteriously while trying to approach the grotto, the entrance to which is hidden underwater at the end of a narrow creek at Sommiere, east of Marseille. An underwater passage leads up to a cavernous air pocket above sea level. Some 30 paintings and imprints cover a wall 50 metres wide.